

Light Within You

Jesus' Words about the Eye as the Lamp of the Body

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Introduction, a Problem of Meaning and Origin

This thesis is an investigation of the meaning and transmission of Jesus' words about the eye as the lamp of the body, and the light within the person.

In the Matthean version of this *logion* Jesus tells us that the lamp of the body is the eye, and that if the eye is ἀπλοῦς, *single*, the whole body would be enlightened. However, if the eye is πονερός, *bad*, the whole body would be dark. Jesus concludes this *logion* by saying: "If then the light in you is dark, how great is the darkness!"¹

The mysterious *logion*, of which the meaning is uncertain at first glance, is found in the Gospel of Matthew 6:22-23, but also in the Gospel of Luke 11:34-35. In the Gospel of Matthew it appears somewhat misplaced in the context of Matthew 6:19-34, where it is surrounded by sayings about what I would call *pious poverty*. In the Gospel of Luke it is embedded in a small pericope about light and shining. In the Gospel of Thomas we find a text that shares similarities with the second part of the *logion* as it appears in Matthew and Luke. In the twenty-fourth *logion* of this sayings gospel Jesus says: "There is light within a man of light, and he lights up the whole world. If he does not shine, he is darkness."² Like Matthew and Luke, the Gospel of Thomas refers to light within a person, and darkness resulting from the failure of this light. Yet the saying in the Gospel of Thomas is rather different from the sayings found in Matthew and Luke. To all three texts applies that the meaning of the *logia* is not obvious clear, and that it is highly contested in scholarship. The main question of this research is therefore:

What is the meaning of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body within its contexts in Matthew, Luke and the Gospel of Thomas?

Answering this question forms the biggest part of this thesis, which investigates the meaning of the *logion* from contexts in which it appears in our three earliest sources Matthew, Luke and the Gospel of Thomas. Corresponding with the three sources there are three chapters, which are divided in paragraphs as follows:

- A first paragraph that consists of an introduction to the source in which we find the discussed context of the *logion* and an argumentation for the demarcation of the chosen pericope forming this context.
- A second paragraph on text criticism in which the Greek text of the *logion* and the context in which it appears will be discussed.
- A third paragraph on the translation of the Greek text as determined in the second paragraph.

¹ Own translation of Matthew. 6:23^b

² Translation according to Robinson, James M. (ed.), *The Coptic gnostic library: a complete edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, Volume 2, (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 65.

- A fourth paragraph on exegesis, focused on explaining the logion's meaning within the given context.

I choose this method because only a thorough investigation of the text and context of the logion can lead to an understanding of its meaning.

The similarities in how the three sources present Jesus' words about *light within the person* and *darkness* lead us to the question about the relation between Matthew, Luke and the Gospel of Thomas, about the transmission of this logion, and about the possibility of a common source from which the logion was incorporated in the three texts. These questions touch upon theories of the reception of the Jesus Tradition as a possible source of sayings like these, and through that, upon the possible origin of these sayings in the acting of the historical Jesus. The second question in this research is therefore:

What can we possibly say about the origin of this logion in earliest Jesus Tradition and in relation to the historical Jesus?

The final chapter of this thesis is about answering this question. In the first part of this chapter, my presumption that the texts of Matthew 6:22-23, Luke 11:34-35, and Gospel of Thomas 24.3 represent three appearances of the same logion is further sustained by a comparison among the three texts of the logion in these sources. On basis of this comparison I will investigate the questions about the relation among Matthew, Luke and the Gospel of Thomas regarding the logion in paragraphs two and three. From this investigation the answer to a plausible common origin is sought for in relation to the Jesus Tradition (paragraph four) and finally in relation to the historical Jesus (paragraph five).

By following the steps mentioned above, the goal of my research is to come to a sustained explanation of the meaning of the logion from its different contexts in Matthew, Luke and the Gospel of Thomas. Besides that, my research aims at developing a theory of the transmittance of this logion before it became incorporated in these texts in a way that fits these differences in their appearance.

The Logion in Matthew

Introduction

The first context in which I will investigate the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body is that of Matthew 6:19-34. In this text the logion is incorporated in a section about what I would call *pious poverty*. In this part of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount Jesus emphasises the significance of not storing up treasures on earth, but of focussing the heart on heavenly treasure. Jesus tells the people that if one searches for the kingdom of God, he does not have to worry about earthly things as food or clothing.

The Gospel of Matthew is traditionally (already around 125 CE) ascribed to the tax collector Matthew, who became an apostle of Jesus.³ However, this ascription is contested by most scholars. Although the gospel was widespread by 100 CE, which indicates a certain authority, the general hypothesis is that this anonymous document was later ascribed to the apostle Matthew. What we can conclude from the text of the gospel is that the author was familiar with the Hebrew Bible and seems Jewish in his redaction of material.⁴ The gospel could be originating from a Jewish-Christian "Matthean community" in a Syrian environment.⁵ Luz states that it is possible that the gospel finds its origin in one community in a Syrian city, where Greek was the common language, like Antioch.⁶ These are, however, no more than probable hypotheses.

Hand in hand with the question about the authorship comes the question about the gospel's date of origin. Dating the gospel is difficult, because it involves questions about the synoptic problem and the spreading of the gospel in the first years after its construction. If we look at the spectrum of scholarly opinions, the dates diverge from 40 CE to after 100 CE.⁷ However, there are indications that lead to sharper dating: first, we can deduce that the Gospel of Matthew could not have been written after the year 80 CE, on basis of quotations and reputed knowledge of this gospel in other sources of early Christianity.⁸ Second, as the readers can take the gentile mission for granted, we must assume that the gospel was written after Paul.⁹ This places the Gospel of Matthew between 60 and 80 CE.

The Gospel of Matthew contains a history of Jesus' life starting with the Nativity story, then proceeding with his baptism as starting point of his acting as 'Son of God', and ending with the sending of the apostles after his resurrection from death. The author of this gospel composed this 'history' of Jesus in order to encourage the readers in their own history with

³ Matthew 9:9-13; 10:3.

⁴ See: Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 33 and 58.

⁵ See: Luz, 1985, p. 88-101.

⁶ See: Luz, 1985, p. 103.

⁷ Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 127-128.

⁸ See: Luz, 1985, p. 103, for the relation between Matthew and Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin, and the letters of Barnabas, Clement and Peter

⁹ Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 138.

Jesus as their Lord and Teacher.¹⁰ Luz describes the gospel as a narrated history of hope, which strengthens the faith and stabilises the Christian identity of the community.¹¹ On the other hand the gospel reprimands the community, by confronting it with Jesus' teachings and rules. Because of its emphasis on final judgement and how to live in purity¹² to come through the narrow gate that leads to life,¹³ the Gospel of Matthew has been called the ethical gospel. The author's most important tools to bring this ethical message of hope and moral education are the speeches of Jesus, around which the author composes his story.

The text discussed in this chapter is part of one of these speeches, known as the "Sermon on the Mount". This long speech, in which Jesus educates his disciples on how they should live, stretches from Matthew 5:3 till 7:27. Although there is a lot to say about this important and influential sermon of Jesus,¹⁴ I will only account for Matthew 6:19-34 as the text in which I choose to investigate the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body.

Like Davies – Allison, I see Matthew 6:19-34 as *one* pericope within Matthews Sermon on the Mount.¹⁵ Luz regards this pericope as *two* sections, namely 6:19-24 and 6:25-34.¹⁶ Betz sees the pericope as part of a larger section of the Sermon on the Mount, namely 6:19-7:12.¹⁷ I follow Betz in his statement that after the end of a cultic section (6:1-18), a new section obviously begins,¹⁸ but the subsequent question is where that section ends. For Betz the end of the pericope is marked with its conclusion in the "golden rule" of 7:12: *So, everything you want the people to do to you, you also do the same to them*¹⁹. To me, however, it seems that what we find in Matthew 7:12 is the conclusion of a pericope about how to relate to other people, starting in 7:1 with the words "*Do not judge ...*",²⁰ and to which the golden rule in verse 12 just fits as a conclusion.²¹

This leaves us with the verses 6:19-34, a section that has the same structure as the text of 7:1-12,²² and is like this section most likely a gathering of separate sayings of Jesus²³, in which the

¹⁰ See: Luz, 1985, p. 46.

¹¹ Luz, 1985, p. 47.

¹² Luz, 1985, p. 47.

¹³ Matthew. 7:14.

¹⁴ As Betz does extensive and accurately detailed in his commentary *The Sermon on the Mount* (Betz, 1995).

¹⁵ See: Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 625.

¹⁶ Luz, 1985, p. 461 and p. 471.

¹⁷ Betz, 1995, p. 423.

¹⁸ Betz, 1995, p. 423.

¹⁹ Πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἐὰν θέλητε ἵνα ποιῶσιν ὑμῖν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιεῖτε αὐτοῖς.

²⁰ Μὴ κρίνετε, ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε.

²¹ Matthew 7:12 is also related to the beginning of the sermon on the mount, where those who were judged for many reasons, are the blessed ones.

²² As shown by Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 626.

²³ Wherever these sayings appear elsewhere in the synoptic tradition, they do so in clusters of similar sayings that provide more obvious contexts (Betz, 1995, p. 426), as we will see with the appearance of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body in Luke.

author of Matthew saw a common theme. We find the key to this theme in verse 33: *So, first seek the kingdom and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*²⁴ It is my assumption that the sayings in Matthew 6:19-34 should be read in the light of this promise, that if one first seeks the Kingdom and its righteousness, all other things shall be given. Being concerned about these other things, or being greedy for them, leads the person from the Kingdom into darkness (verse 23), thus serving the wrong master (verse 24). Introduced by the summons to set the heart on heavenly instead of earthly treasure, and concluded by the summons not to be concerned about tomorrow, we find in Matthew 6:19-34 a pericope about what I will discuss hereafter as *unconcerned pious poverty*, which serves the righteousness of the Kingdom. For this reason I will attend to the whole pericope of Matthew 6:19-34 in the following. I am convinced that the meaning of the logion in Matthew cannot be found without this context. If we take the author of the Gospel of Matthew seriously, it is not without reason that the logion is mentioned among these sayings about pious poverty. I will therefore start with the whole text and translation of Jesus' appeal to pious poverty in Matthew 6:19-34.

²⁴ Ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην] αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα πάντα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν.

Text of Matthew 6:19-34

Below you will find my text critical reconstruction of the oldest verifiable Greek text of Matthew 6:19-34. The information on the Greek manuscripts and the variation among the text witnesses is derived from Nestle – Alands' twenty-eighth' edition of *Novum Testamentum Graece*.

¹⁹Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅπου σῆς καὶ βρῶσις ἀφανίζει καὶ ὅπου κλέπται διορύσσουσιν καὶ κλέπτουσιν·

²⁰θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῷ, ὅπου οὔτε σῆς οὔτε βρῶσις ἀφανίζει καὶ ὅπου κλέπται οὐ διορύσσουσιν οὐδὲ κλέπτουσιν²⁵.

²¹ὅπου γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ θησαυρός σου²⁶, ἐκεῖ ἔσται καὶ²⁷ ἡ καρδία σου²⁸.

²²Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν ὁ ὀφθαλμός. ἐὰν οὖν²⁹ ἡ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς³⁰, ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινὸν ἔσται·

²⁵ Some manuscripts portray καὶ κλέπτουσιν instead of οὐδὲ κλέπτουσιν. I choose for the last option because of the number of manuscripts. According to Betz, καὶ κλέπτουσιν is clearly an improvement of οὐδὲ κλέπτουσιν, because διορύσσουσιν *implies* κλέπτουσιν (Betz, 1995, p. 433). Betz argues that the manuscripts W k perhaps omit these words for that same reason. Against Betz however, I am convinced that we should consider κλέπτουσιν and διορύσσουσιν as two different ways of stealing (see also page 11). The secondary text καὶ κλέπτουσιν can be explained by the wrong idea of early copyists that διορύσσουσιν *implies* κλέπτουσιν.

²⁶ Together with footnote ²⁸. Instead of both uses of σου in this verse, we find υμῶν in a great number of manuscripts. The use of σου in the better text witnesses א and B, together with Matthew's use of σου in the surrounding verses 17, 18, 22, and 23 (see: Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 632), makes σου the most probable authentic reading. A second argument for σου is that the imperative plural used in the verses 19-20 and the use of υμῶν in Luke's parallel on this text, both make σου the *lectio difficilior* compared to υμῶν and therefore the *lectio probabilior*.

²⁷ B and bo^{ms} omit καί compared to the other manuscripts. It is reasonable to accept that καί disappeared from these manuscripts by haplography, or because καί is not necessary in the sentence. Betz claims that the parallel in Luke 12:34 shows that καί should be read (Betz, 1995, p. 435).

²⁸ See footnote ²⁶.

²⁹ Compared to the text above, οὖν is left out in the manuscript of א and in manuscripts from the traditions lat, sy^c, mae and bo^{ms}. Considering this small amount of text witnesses, the text with οὖν has the strongest probability to be the original text. Another strong argument for the chosen variant is that ἐὰν οὖν is unique in the synoptic gospels to Matthew (Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 637), and is therefore the best reading of this Matthean text.

³⁰ For this text we should also look at the text discussed in footnote³¹, because the variations seem to come forth from harmonising the two texts. A variant to the chosen text above is found in K, L, Γ, Θ, and others, reading ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς ἢ instead of ἢ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς. In this text we not only see harmonisation with verse 23, but also with the text of the logion as it appears in Luke 11:33. This makes the chosen text the *lectio difficilior* and therefore the *lectio probabilior*. A second argument for the chosen text is that it differs from the well witnessed text (only א*, W and 33 deviate) that is discussed in footnote ³¹.

23^{Εάν δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου πονηρός ἦ}³¹, ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινὸν ἔσται. εἰ οὖν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ σκότος ἐστίν, τὸ σκότος πόσον.

24^{Οὐδεὶς (...)} ³² δύναται δυσὶ κυρίοις δουλεύειν· ἢ γὰρ τὸν ἓνα μισήσει καὶ τὸν ἕτερον ἀγαπήσει, ἢ ἐνὸς ἀνθέξεται καὶ τοῦ ἑτέρου καταφρονήσει. οὐ δύνασθε θεῷ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾷ.

25^{Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν· μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῇ ψυχῇ ὑμῶν τί φάγητε (...)} ³³, μηδὲ τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν τί ἐνδύσησθε. οὐχὶ ἡ ψυχὴ πλεῖον ἐστὶν τῆς τροφῆς καὶ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ ἐνδύματος;

26^{ἐμβλέψατε εἰς τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὅτι οὐ σπεύρουσιν οὐδὲ θερίζουσιν οὐδὲ συνάγουσιν εἰς (...)} ³⁴ ἀποθήκας, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τρέφει αὐτά· οὐχ ὑμεῖς μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν;

27^{τίς δὲ ἐξ ὑμῶν μεριμνῶν δύναται προσθεῖναι ἐπὶ τὴν ἡλικίαν αὐτοῦ πῆχυν ἓνα;}

28^{Καὶ περὶ ἐνδύματος τί μεριμνᾶτε; καταμάθετε τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ πῶς αὐξάνουσιν· οὐ κοπιῶσιν οὐδὲ νήθουσιν}³⁵.

29^{λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδὲ Σολομὼν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ περιεβάλετο ὡς ἐν τούτων.}

30^{εἰ δὲ τὸν χόρτον τοῦ ἀγροῦ σήμερον ὄντα καὶ αὔριον εἰς κλίβανον βαλλόμενον ὁ θεὸς οὕτως ἀμφιέννυσιν, οὐ πολλῷ μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς, ὀλιγόπιστοι;}

31^{Μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε λέγοντες· τί φάγωμεν; ἢ· τί πίωμεν; ἢ· τί περιβαλώμεθα;}

³¹ See footnote ³⁰. The original reading of Codex Sinaiticus, together with W and 33, reads ἡ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου πονηρός. Together with my argumentation under footnote ³⁰, I let this small number of manuscripts weigh in my decision to choose the above noted text.

³² Some manuscripts added οἰκετης. As easily explained by parallel readings in Luke 16:13, this is most likely a secondary reading.

³³ Lutz considers ἡ τί πίνετε as authentic, despite the equivalent in verse 31, because it does not correspond to the Lukan parallel. His argument is that it is formal asymmetric and not assumed by τροφῆς (Lutz, 1985, p. 472). According to Davies – Allison, however, ἡ τί πίνετε is probably secondary, being added to improve the rhetorical correlation between verse 25 and verse 31 (cf. Luke 12:29). This can be supported by the fact that Jerome attested the reading, “or what you will drink”, with the words that he found in some (improved?) copies (Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 646). I followed this argumentation in my choice, and see ἡ τί πίνετε as a later addition influenced by the words of verse 31 of this text.

³⁴ In a revision of 8, and in L and 12211, τάς is added.

³⁵ One of the variations to the text above is αὐξάνει οὐ κοπία οὐδε νηθει, which we find in K, L, W, Δ, Π, f¹³, 28, 565700, 892, and others (al). This appears to be a scribal correction, introduced because the plural subject is neuter gender (Metzger, 1994, p. 15). Another interesting variant is ξένουσιν οὐδὲ νήθουσιν οὐδὲ κοπιῶσιν. This unique reading for Matthew 6:28 was discovered by T. C. Skeat, who showed in 1938 by using ultraviolet light that the original scribe of the Codex Sinaiticus (8*) instead of αὐξάνουσιν had written οὐ ξένουσιν. This reading is similar to the reading in the Gospel of Thomas manuscript P. Oxy. 655, although it is James M. Robinson who convincingly shows that the words of Matthew 6:28 in 8* and saying 36 of the Gospel of Thomas in P. Oxy. 655 probably contain an old pre-gospel tradition (See: Robinson, 2005). However, considering the text criticism on the Gospel of Matthew, ξένουσιν οὐδὲ νήθουσιν οὐδὲ κοπιῶσιν in 8* should be considered as a scribal idiosyncrasy that was almost immediately corrected (Metzger, 1994, p. 15).

³²πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα³⁶ τὰ ἔθνη ἐπιζητοῦσιν³⁷. οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος ὅτι χρῆζετε τούτων ἀπάντων.

³³ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν (...) καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην³⁸ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα πάντα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν.

³⁴Μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε εἰς τὴν αὔριον, ἢ γὰρ αὔριον μεριμνήσει ἑαυτῆς³⁹. ἀρκετὸν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἢ κακία αὐτῆς.

³⁶ Different manuscripts read ταῦτα γὰρ πάντα instead of πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα. The fact that this corresponds to the reading in Luke, together with the argument that Matthew generally prefers ταῦτα before πάντα (Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 657), points to the aspect of harmonising and therefore advocates the reading πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα.

³⁷ A number of manuscripts (a.o. K, L, N, W, and Δ) read ἐπιζήτει instead of ἐπιζητοῦσιν. Although the use of a singular verb with a neutrum plural subject is standard in Attic Greek, the use of the plural verb instead became more common since the Hellenistic age. In New Testament Greek the plural is used with neutra pointing at persons, while the singular is used with neutra pointing at non-personal things (Blass – Debrunner – Rehkopf, 2001, p. 110). This explains the variant ἐπιζήτει as a correction based on an Attic understanding of the New Testament Greek.

³⁸ The textually difficulty of this fragment lies in the attribution of τοῦ θεοῦ to τὴν βασιλείαν in different manuscripts. According to Luz, τοῦ θεοῦ is an addition resulting from the correction by numerous manuscripts of the unusual unattributed βασιλείαν (Luz, 1985, p. 473). Betz states that in Matthew βασιλείαν is always attributed with τῶν οὐρανῶν, and never with τοῦ θεοῦ (Betz, 1995, p. 481-482). These things point to the unattributed version as the more difficult, and therefore the most probable authentic reading. C1 reads τῶν οὐρανῶν as a result of the frequent use of τῶν οὐρανῶν as addition to βασιλείαν by the author of Matthew.

³⁹ There are five variations on the chosen text, all supported by less authoritative or a smaller number of texts witnesses. I therefore follow the choice of Nestle – Aland.

Translation of Matthew 6:19-34

Below you will find my translation of Matthew 6:19-34 from the Greek text as identified in the former paragraph.

¹⁹ *Do not store up for yourselves treasures⁴⁰ on earth, where moth and decay⁴¹ ruin, and where thieves break in or⁴² steal;*

²⁰ *but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay ruins, and where thieves do not break in nor steal;*

²¹ *for, wherever your treasure is, there will also be your heart⁴³.*

²² *The lamp of the body is the eye; so when your eye is single/modest,⁴⁴ your whole body is enlightened;*

²³ *however, when your eye is bad/greedy,⁴⁵ your whole body shall be dark; if then the light in you is dark, how great is the darkness!*

⁴⁰ It seems to me that it is important for a proper understanding of this text that we do not understand θησαυρούς in the sense of *treasury*, like gold and silver, but more in the sense of *richness in goods*, like food and clothing. My argument for this interpretation is that the treasures in verse 19 and 20 become explicit in verses 25-34 of this pericope, where Jesus speaks about gathering food into barns, and toiling for clothes.

⁴¹ The Greek word βρώσις has something in it of *eating* or *consuming*, and should be translated here as the act of eating or consuming by which the treasure is ruined. I choose to translate with *decay*, as the visible process of the treasure being consumed or eaten by whatsoever. A common translation of βρώσις in this verse is *rust* (KJV, ESV, NBV). As I will show in the next paragraph, the only reason for this translation is the wrong assumption that the treasure that is spoken of is metallic. This will be discussed more elaborately in the next paragraph about the meaning of the logion in Matthean context.

⁴² I would translate *or* because διορύσσουσιν and κλέπτουσιν represent two different actions of stealing. Διορύσσουσιν as the one by *breaking in* or *digging through* the wall of the storage place of the treasure (Lutz, 1985, p. 464), and κλέπτουσιν to refer to other acts of *stealing*.

⁴³ Καρδία means literary heart, but is often used as a metaphor in the meaning of awareness, will, desire, love or disposition. It is the person's centre (Luz, 1985, p. 464). Καρδία was also seen as the place of thought and can therefore be translated as mind (see: Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 632). In this text καρδία points to the mind-set that comes from desire. A person's desire is shown by what one is focused on. In this text the "treasure" shows what the person is focused on, what his desire is, and what is most important to him.

⁴⁴ A direct translation of ἀπλοῦς would be *single*, but in this context I would plead for an understanding of this word as *pure* or *modest*. It is just that I have not found an English word that covers the double meaning the word ἀπλοῦς has in this text. A good translation would be the Dutch *eenvoudig* or the German *einfach*, meaning *single* but also *sober/simple/modest*. The meaning of ἀπλοῦς is further explained in the next paragraph on the meaning of the logion in Matthean context.

⁴⁵ Πονηρός is commonly translated as *bad* or *evil*. But, as to ἀπλοῦς applies, there might be a double meaning in this word to which the author refers to. Probable possibilities within this context could be *corrupt* or *greedy*, explaining the *badness* or *evil* which is at stake.

²⁴ *No one can serve two lords; either he shall hate the first and love the other, or he shall be dedicated to the first and despise the other; You cannot serve God and Mammon/your fortune⁴⁶.*

²⁵ *Therefore I say to you: "Do not be concerned about your life what you shall eat, nor about your body what you should wear; is not life more than food and body [more] than clothing?*

²⁶ *Look at the birds of the heaven for they do not sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns, but your heavenly father nourishes [them]; are you not much more valuable than them?*

²⁷ *Who among you is able by being concerned to add a single cubit to his life time?*

²⁸ *And why are you concerned about clothing? Observe the flowers⁴⁷ of the field, how they grow; they do not spin, nor toil.*

²⁹ *I say to you that not even Salomon in all his glory clothed himself as one of them.*

³⁰ *If so God dresses the grass of the field existing today and thrown in the oven tomorrow, not much more you, Ye of little faith?*

³¹ *So, do not be concerned saying: "what shall we eat", or "what shall we drink", or "with what shall we cloth ourselves?"*

³² *For all of this is what the gentiles seek for; while your heavenly father knows that you need all these things.*

³³ *So, first seek the kingdom and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

³⁴ *Therefore, do not be concerned about tomorrow, because tomorrow concerns for itself; its [own] badness is enough for the day.*

⁴⁶ Mammon is a Semitism signifying 'resources', 'money', 'property', 'possession', personified as idol by the earliest Christians (see: Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 643). According to Luz, μαμωνᾱ has an Aramaic origin in ממונא, meaning *stock*, but is neutrally used in Hebrew and Aramaic in the meaning of richness and fortune (Luz, 1985, p. 468). In light of this I choose to add here the translation *your fortune* to the transcription of the Greek μαμωνᾱ.

⁴⁷ Scholars tried to substantiate what flowers are meant here (see: Davies- Allison, 1988, p. 654; and Betz, 1995, p. 476). I choose to translate with the general term *flowers*, as the general *birds* is meant in verse 26 by the Greek πετεινά.

The Meaning of the Logion in Matthean Context

From the two paragraphs above we can say that the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body appears in Matthew 6:22-23 as follows:

22 Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν ὁ ὀφθαλμός. ἐὰν οὖν ᾗ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς, ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινὸν ἔσται·

23 ἐὰν δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου πονηρὸς ᾗ, ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινὸν ἔσται. εἰ οὖν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ σκότος ἐστίν, τὸ σκότος πόσον.

22 *The lamp of the body is the eye; so when your eye is single/modest, your whole body is enlightened;*

23 *however, when your eye is bad/greedy, your whole body shall be dark; if then the light in you is dark, how great is the darkness!*

The meaning of the logion is difficult and of great dispute in New Testament scholarship. There are basically two ways how scholars interpret this logion. The first is physiological, the second ethical. In this paragraph I will not attend to the physiological interpretation of the logion,⁴⁸ because the context in Matthew 6:19-34, and the broader context of the Sermon on the Mount, is about ethics. About the question whether this context can be used for the interpretation of the individual logia, the opinions in scholarship differ. Some see the so-called third part⁴⁹ of the Sermon on the Mount (6:19-7:12) as just a collection of separate sayings, each with its own meaning independent from the others. An argument against that view is that this hypothesis does not explain why they are placed together here in a carefully built up sermon.⁵⁰ Matthew could have placed these individual logia in separate contexts in his gospel, like Luke did. Instead we find these sayings together within the setting of his Sermon on the Mount. To me this is an indication that the author did see a common theme in them and placed them together, to build his argumentation. From this point of view the context forms a possible tool to find the meaning of the logion, because the logion receives its (new) meaning, at least partly, from this context.

For the interpretation of the context of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body in Matthew, my starting point is the same as Walter T. Wilson's, namely Matthew 6:33. This is the verse in which we find a summary and interpretation key to the pericope 6:19-34. The three sections of the main body of the Sermon on the Mount represent, according to Walter T. Wilson, three forms of righteousness.⁵¹ He states that the third section of this sermon (6:19-7:11), which our pericope is part, instructs the disciples on practicing righteousness with reference to

⁴⁸ For this I refer to the paragraph about the meaning of the logion in Lukan context, especially p. 22-23.

⁴⁹ "There is broad agreement as to the sermon's basic structure: the introduction (5:3-16) and conclusion (7:13-27) flank the main body, which consists of three parts" (Wilson, 2007, p. 305). These three parts are divided as follows: part one 5:17-48, part two 6:1-18, part three 6:19-7:12.

⁵⁰ As shown by Betz (1995, especially p. 1-5 and 44-65).

⁵¹ See: Wilson, 2007.

‘goods’, referring in the first place to mammon, but including other measures of personal worth as well.⁵² I think we can be more explicit than Wilson here, but to come to that point we have to read the pericope in the light of Matthew 6:33:

*So, first seek the kingdom and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*⁵³

From this promise we learn that whoever seeks the righteousness of the kingdom does not have to concern about the things he needs. In the light of this verse the pericope shows that there is no concern needed about the badness of days to come (6:34), not about food or clothing (6:25-31), not about fortune (6:24), not about any earthly treasures (6:19), because these things are what the gentiles seek for (6:32), while the disciples of Jesus should focus their hearts on heavenly treasures (6:21). The seeker of the righteousness of the kingdom does not have to concern about these things because his heavenly father knows what he needs (6:32). Reading the pericope like this, it is about *unconcerned piety*: searching the kingdom, heavenly treasure, without concern about anything else. Unlike most scholars say, I am convinced that the focus of this concern lies with the daily concern about food and clothing. This also applies to the treasures one does not have to store up for himself, and for the fortune the word Mammon refers to. As I will show, both terms are commonly incorrectly interpreted from the presumption that treasure is gold and silver.

The presumption that θησαυρούς represents gold or silver becomes clear in how the Greek word βρῶσις is translated. Although all over the New Testament the word is correctly used in the sense of eating or food (John 4:32; Romans 14:17; Hebrews 12:16; e.o.), a common translation of βρῶσις in Matthew 6:19 is *rust* (KJV, ESV, NBV, see also: Betz, 1995, p. 428). The problem with this translation is, however, that there cannot be accounted for in other New Testament texts, or even other ancient Greek texts.⁵⁴ In all texts other than Matthew 6:19, βρῶσις has to do with *eating* or *food* and instead of *rust*. Davies – Allison explain the wrong translation of βρῶσις in this verse by a parallel in James 5:3,⁵⁵ a text that indeed does connect the treasure gathered on earth with gold and silver that rust.⁵⁶ A second explanation for the wrong translation of βρῶσις as *rust* could be the Vulgata’s translation *aerugo* which means *copper rust*,⁵⁷ but this probably came forth from the same parallel influence from James 5:3. The wrong reasoning for this verse has always been: *treasure* means *gold and silver*, so βρῶσις must mean *rust*. That this reasoning is persistent is demonstrated by the fact that even the Greek-

⁵² Wilson, 2007, p. 323.

⁵³ Ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα πάντα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν.

⁵⁴ See: Liddell – Scott, 1925, and Bauer, 1988 under βρῶσις.

⁵⁵ Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 629.

⁵⁶ *Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you, and it will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days.*

Greek text: ὁ χρυσὸς ὑμῶν καὶ ὁ ἄργυρος κατίωται καὶ ὁ ἰὸς αὐτῶν εἰς μαρτύριον ὑμῖν ἔσται καὶ φάγεται τὰς σάρκας ὑμῶν ὡς πῦρ. ἐθησαυρίσατε ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις.

⁵⁷ Luz, 1985, p. 464.

English lexicon of Liddell – Scott adds the meaning *rust* to their lemma on βρωσις with Matthew 6:19 as only reference. Against all misunderstanding in scholarship it should be clear that βρωσις implies that the treasure in Matthew 6:19 *could be eaten*. It is perishable, and therefore the parallel with James does not lie in James 5:3, but in one verse before that, James 5:2. This verse speaks of *rotten riches* and *moth eaten cloths* in the context of earthly treasure.⁵⁸

There is no fundamental reason to assume that something else than food stocks or clothing are meant by the treasure in Matthew 6. Davies – Allison and also Luz therefore seek the meaning of βρωσις in a sort of insect as it is used next to the *moth*.⁵⁹ A firm ground for this interpretation is the fact that the Semitic root אכל, meaning to eat, is used in some texts to indicate an insect as the one who eats. An example of this we find in Malachi 3:11, where a grasshopper is meant with the word אכל. This word is translated in the Septuagint as βρωσις.⁶⁰

A second saying in our pericope that could point to concern about treasure other than food and clothing is that in which Jesus says that you cannot serve God and Mammon (6:24). But, although Mammon is mostly interpreted as richness or fortune or an idol referring to these things,⁶¹ the Aramaic ממונא was neutrally used in Hebrew and Aramaic as referring to *stock*.⁶² It is this meaning that shows the intention behind the theme of treasure in the pericope. Stock is the kind of *fortune* people make. It gives certainty, an unconcerned earthly life, because there is enough food and clothing. Against that, Jesus places the concern for the Kingdom, while all these other things shall be given.

From the things stated above, we have to conclude that the text of Matthew 6:19-34 provides a pericope that summons seeking for righteousness of the kingdom, while not concerning about anything else. Food and clothing will be provided by the Heavenly Father, who knows what is needed. Things other than that are just transient treasures on earth. The logion about the eye as the lamp of the body (6:22-23) is carefully composed in the middle of all this and should therefore be interpreted in line with the common theme of *unconcerned piety*.

Apart from the interpretation of the context, there are some other interpretative issues problematizing the finding of the meaning of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body in Matthew. These issues, or problems, can be divided in two groups. The first concerns the interpretation of the source of the light and the functioning of the eye. These issues will not be discussed further in this paragraph, but will be elaborated on in the paragraph about the logion in Lukan context, which is a context about light and shining. For the understanding of

⁵⁸ *Your riches have rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten.*

Greek text: ὁ πλοῦτος ὑμῶν σέσηπεν καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια ὑμῶν σητόβρωτα γέγονεν,

⁵⁹ See: Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 630; and Luz, 1985, p. 464.

⁶⁰ וְיִצְרָחֵי לָכֶם בְּאֶכְל וְלֹא־יִשָּׁחַד לָכֶם אֶת־פְּרִי הָאָדָמָה וְלֹא־תִשָּׁכַח לָכֶם הַגָּפֶן בַּיָּשָׁף אֲמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

LXX: καὶ διαστελῶ ὑμῖν εἰς βρωσιν καὶ οὐ μὴ διαφθείρω ὑμῶν τὸν καρπὸν τῆς γῆς καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀσθενήσῃ ὑμῶν ἡ ἄμπελος ἢ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ

⁶¹ Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 643.

⁶² Luz, 1985, p. 468

the logion within Matthew 6:19-34, I follow Sinai Turan's theory on this issue, namely that the eye/lamp comparison is an ancient popular physiognomic-ethical aphorism, which does not take the eyes as a "mirror of the soul", but rather as a mirror of the "body" and, figuratively, a mirror of the "character" or "spirit".⁶³ In other words: the eye shows what people are like.

The second interpretation issue concerns the interpretation about the meaning, in relation to the eye, of the common term *πονηρός* in opposition to the somewhat strange *ἀπλοῦς*. Ancient Jewish texts often mention the "impudent eye", the "beguiling eye", and the "evil eye"⁶⁴ with the Hebrew term *עין רע* to which the Greek *ὀφθαλμός πονηρός* would be the synonym. The term *עין רע* is, for example in Proverbs,⁶⁵ often contrasted with *עין טוב*, the good eye which expresses the generous, good person.⁶⁶ This evidence shows that a moral reading of the logion in Matthew 6:22-23 fits its (Hellenistic-)Jewish background in the use of the moral pair of terms *עין רע* and *עין טוב*. Having determined this, however, one problem remains: the Hebrew *עין טוב* assumes the Greek reading *ὀφθαλμός ἀγαθός*, as we find in Matthew 20:15. In this text a same moral meaning is meant when the master of the house says: "..., or is your eye bad, because I am good?"⁶⁷ So, as is in line with the (Hellenistic-)Jewish word pair *עין טוב/עין רע* and with Matthew 20:15, we would expect in Matthew 6:22-23 *ὀφθαλμός ἀγαθός* as opponent of the *ὀφθαλμός πονηρός*. Instead we find *ἀπλοῦς* as attribute to the eye in this passage.

To find the meaning of *ἀπλοῦς* in the text of Matthew 6:22-23, we will first look at the term *ἀπλότης* (*singleness*).⁶⁸ Two authors, Cony Edlund⁶⁹ and Joseph Amstutz⁷⁰, have drawn attention to this word as a key term in Jewish ethics.⁷¹ According to Edlund the terms *ἀπλότης τῆς καρδίας* and *ἀπλότης τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν* point to the religious motive behind the people's actions.⁷² Amstutz states that *ἀπλότης* stands for "integrity" of the pious, who totally, undivided and unrestrictedly belong to God in obedience and devotion.⁷³ In other words,

⁶³ Turan, 2008, p. 90.

⁶⁴ Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 640.

⁶⁵ See: Proverbs

22:9, טוב־עין הוא יברך בִּיָּתוֹן מִלְחָמוֹ לְדָל,

אֶל־תִּלְחֶם אֶת־לִבְךָ עִין וְאֶל־תִּתְּאוֹ לְמַטְעַמְתּוֹ,

נִבְרָה לְהוֹן אִישׁ רַע עִין וְלֹא־יֵדַע בִּיָּסוּר יִבְאֵנוּ,

⁶⁶ Zöckler, 2001, p. 489.

⁶⁷ ἢ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου πονηρός ἐστὶν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἀγαθός εἰμι;

⁶⁸ *ἀπλοῦς* is only attested in Matthew 6:22 and Luke 11:34. In the Old Testament we only find it in the LXX text of Proverbs 11:25, but without a Hebrew equivalent in the Hebrew Bible text (see: Murre, 2009).

⁶⁹ Edlund, Conny, *Das Auge der Einfalt: Eine Untersuchung zu Matth. 6,22-23 und Luk. 11,34-35*, (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1952).

⁷⁰ Amstutz, Joseph, *ΑΠΛΟΤΗΣ: Eine begriffsgeschichtliche Studie zum jüdisch-christlichen Griechisch*, (Bonn: Hanstein, 1968).

⁷¹ Zöckler, 2001, p. 489.

⁷² Edlund, 1952, p. 79.

⁷³ "Schliesslich bezeichnet *ἀπλότης* die "Integrität" des Frommen, der ganz, ungeteilt und vorbehaltlos Gott gehört in Gehorsam und Ergebenheit." Quoted in Hollander – De Jonge, 1985, p.233-234.

serving God is the only, *single*, concern of the person owning this virtue of ἀπλότης. Following its attestation in the Apocrypha and later Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible, we can say that the term became more common in the first century BCE.⁷⁴ Especially in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs ἀπλότης is a fundamental religious notion,⁷⁵ denoting the ideal of the pious person who is devoting his life to the perfect fulfilment of God's will.⁷⁶ In the Testament of Issachar we see that this virtue of singleness is thematised: he who sees everything in singleness (4:6), who walks in singleness (3:2), like God (5:8), in the singleness of the heart (4:1; 7:7), or who walks in *singleness of the eyes* (3:4)⁷⁷, is the person of integrity.⁷⁸ In Testament of Issachar 4:6 we read:

*For he walks in uprightness of life, and looks at all things in simplicity, not welcoming with the eyes bad things that come from the deceit of the world, lest he would see anything in the commandments of the Lord in a perverted way.*⁷⁹

The same virtue of *singleness* as described above is what we find in the logion of Matthew 6:22-23. "The single eye gives light to the whole body, denoting to the morally intact person. A bad eye has the opposite result; it causes darkness in the body, a corrupt ethical condition."⁸⁰ Reckoning the eye as indicator of the state of "body" as described above, the ἀπλοῦς eye mirrors a light body/spirit/character, not only shining within, but also to the world around. On the other hand the πονηρός eye mirrors a dark body/spirit/character, casting shadow instead of light. The singleness of the eye in Matthew 6:22, like the virtue of *singleness* as we find it in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, points to the single concern for the Kingdom. It comes to us in the context of Matthew 6:19-34, where all other daily concerns, like food and clothing are nullified by Jesus' sayings about treasure in heaven and God's care for unremarkable birds and flowers.

In the context of Matthew 6:19-34 the logion about the eye as the lamp to the body shows that the true disciple of Jesus is directed to one single goal: the kingdom and its righteousness. His *single* eye contains the light from within, and sees only this goal without concerning about anything else. He is humble, *einfach*, trusting in the Heavenly Father that he will give what he needs. In his searching for the kingdom he shares the light within him, being a light to the world (Matthew 5:14). In contrast with him, the one with a *bad* eye worries, splitting his focus and concerns, seeking fortune and certainty for his own earthly future. This makes him greedy

⁷⁴ Edlund, 1952, p. 78.

⁷⁵ Edlund, 1952, p. 78.

⁷⁶ Zöckler, 2001, p. 490.

⁷⁷ Greek text: οὐ καταλάησά τινος οὐδὲ ἔψεξα βίον ἀνθρώπου, πορευόμενος ἐν ἀπλότητι ὀφθαλμῶν (De Jonge, 1978, p. 83).

⁷⁸ See: Zöckler, 2001, p. 490.

⁷⁹ Hollander – De Jonge, 1985, p. 242; Greek text: πορεύεται γὰρ ἐν εὐθύτητι ζωῆς, καὶ πάντα ὄρα ἐν ἀπλότητι, μὴ ἐπιδεχόμενος ὀφθαλμοῖς πονηρίας ἀπὸ τῆς πλάνης τοῦ κόσμου, ἵνα μὴ ἴδῃ διεστραμμένως τι τῶν ἐντολῶν τοῦ κυρίου (De Jonge, 1978, p. 85).

⁸⁰ Zöckler, 2001, p.490.

and corrupt, showing the darkness inside and darkening the world around him. *"How great is the darkness!"*

The Logion in Luke

Introduction

The second context in which I will investigate Jesus' logion about the eye as the lamp of the body is that of Luke 11:33-36. This text forms a small pericope about light and shining within the first book of the two-volume work Luke-Acts.

It was Ireneus who, around 180 CE, associated the third gospel with Luke, the companion of Paul,⁸¹ but around 200 CE Luke was definitely considered the author of the third gospel and Acts by Clement and Tertullian, and from then on has been seen as such in the memory of the church.⁸² The Canon Muratori describes the author of the third gospel as the physician Luke, who came to Christianity by Paul.⁸³ The author of the Gospel of Luke, however, does not tell us much about himself, nor does he share his name. Surely, however, it is the same person as the author of the Acts of the Apostles, which he calls his second work and which is dedicated to the same receiver Theophilus. In both these works the author speaks about himself in first person.⁸⁴ Following this perspective we see that the author shows himself as a companion of Paul, from his departure from Philippi until his arrival in Jerusalem (20:6-21:17), and in Paul's final journey from Jerusalem via Malta to Rome (27:1-28:15). Bovon sees this "we-perspective" as a tool that is used to establish credibility and keep the story alive,⁸⁵ but this may contradict the historiographical style of the texts. A possibility would be that the first reader knew the author, which allows him to switch perspective from "he" (Paul) to "we" (Paul and author), when describing the events that he himself was part of, without explaining.⁸⁶ This places the author in the Christian community of Philippi.⁸⁷ However, we cannot be sure about these issues. Especially because the author does not describe any central theme of Paul's theology, and his own theology quite deviates from that of Paul.⁸⁸ The events as described in Acts even differ from the picture drawn in Paul's letters.⁸⁹ What we can say, however, is that the author of Luke had a Greek education⁹⁰, and knew about both Greek rhetoric and Jewish exegesis.⁹¹ Possibly the author was a gentile-Christian living in contact with the diaspora⁹² in a Greek-speaking urban environment. The prologue of Luke shows that the author should be considered a second or third generation Christian, who had access to "*the things that have been*

⁸¹ Klein, 2006, p. 62.

⁸² Bovon, 1991, p. 29.

⁸³ See: Klein, 2006, p. 63.

⁸⁴ Lk. 1:1-3; Ac. 1:1; and as companion of Paul from Macedonia to Rome, Ac. 20:6, 8, 13-15; 21:1-8, 15-17; 27:1-8, 15-16, 20, 27-37; 28:1, 7, 10, 11-15.

⁸⁵ Bovon, 1991, p. 27.

⁸⁶ This way of thinking might have led to the ascription of the Gospel to Luke the companion of Paul.

⁸⁷ Following Acts. 20:6.

⁸⁸ Schnelle, 2007, p. 284-285.

⁸⁹ Schnelle, 2007, p. 285.

⁹⁰ Klein, 2006, p. 65; Bovon, 1991, p. 27.

⁹¹ Bovon, 1991, p. 27.

⁹² Schnelle, 2007, p. 286.

accomplished, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us".⁹³

The Gospel of Luke is commonly dated around the last quarter of the first century CE. Most scholars agree that the precise description of the fall of Jerusalem (70 CE) in Luke 21:20-24 shows that the gospel should be dated after this event. On the other hand, the author shows no knowledge about the persecution of Christians by the Roman state, which makes a date after 90 CE implausible.⁹⁴ It would therefore be a safe guess to date the Gospel of Luke between 70 and 90 CE. The suggestion of the death of Paul (Acts. 20:25, 38; 21:13), together with the perspective from a third-generation of earliest Christianity places the two volume Luke-Acts around 90 CE,⁹⁵ or maybe 80-85 CE.⁹⁶

The art of composition, the language proficiency, and the style of the two books of Luke-Acts testify to an excellent work, both literary and theologically.⁹⁷ In Luke the history of Jesus is described from birth to ascension. The author's goal is to show the history of Jesus as a history of salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*). By the synchronisms in Luke 2:1 and 3:1-2, he connects the history of Jesus with the political history of his time, showing the acting of Jesus as a significant part of general world history.⁹⁸ The author is particularly concerned to explain how non-Jews, in Christ, become part of the salvation of the Jewish people.⁹⁹ His work Luke-Acts shows the history of this salvation coming up from Judaism in Jesus as the promised messiah to the Jews as the people of God. In Jesus, God's promise of salvation to his people also shines out to the gentiles. This plan of God, expressed in the frequent use of word *δεῖ*, unfolds in the history as it is told by Luke-Acts. With this concept of *Heilsgeschichte*, Luke-Acts provides a crucial orientation in time and history to a Christian community struggling with the delay of the parousia.¹⁰⁰ The author wants to stress that this delay of the end cannot be used to nullify the truth of the Christian message.¹⁰¹ Since it is his belief that God's plan is to bring salvation not only to the Jews but to all people, it might be part of God's plan that the end just comes when all the people, Jews and gentiles, are reached with the *Gospel* of salvation in Jesus Christ. Until then the reader of Luke-Acts is part of this planned salvation history, that is announced in Luke 2 with the words of Simeon: *...my eyes have seen your salvation, that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory to your people Israel* (Luke 2:30-

⁹³ Lk. 1:1-2.

⁹⁴ See: Klein, 2006, p. 69.

⁹⁵ Schnelle, 2007, p. 286.

⁹⁶ Ehrman, 2004, p. 114; 130.

⁹⁷ Bovon, 1991, p. 23.

⁹⁸ Schnelle, 2007, p. 294.

⁹⁹ Ehrman, 2004, p. 99.

¹⁰⁰ See: Schnelle, 2007, p. 297.

¹⁰¹ Ehrman, 2004, p. 131.

32)."¹⁰² It is in this light of *Heilsgeschichte* we should read the pericope about light and shining in Luke 11:33-36.

Luke 11:33-36 can be seen as one pericope because of its differences with the surrounding texts. In the preceding verses the people are asking for signs (11:16), misinterpreting the sign of Jesus' casting out demons (11:15), and are therefore judged by him as a depraved generation (11:29). After an oration of repent and judgement in 11:29-32, a new speech starts in Luke 11:33 in second person singular, where the former was in second plural. In this new pericope Jesus turns to the hearer and addresses him directly, switching the theme from rightly hearing to rightly seeing¹⁰³, or from judgement to light. Luke 11:33-36, as a short speech about light and shining, functions as a bridge between the text that precedes and the text that follows. Jesus tells the people about a lamp that is set on a lamp standard, instead of in a basement. In this way he reproaches them that they do not recognise the source (God through Jesus) of the light (the signs, like Jesus' casting out demons) that shines, although it is clearly visible. The following logion in the pericope (11:34-36) about the eye as the lamp of the body could then be seen as an introduction to the following discourse against the Pharisees in 11:37-54, because the darkness in the body can be seen as a hint to the Pharisees' inner impurity. This discourse forms a new pericope and is introduced with the words: "*Then, having said these things...*"¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Greek text: Εἶδον οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου τὸ σωτήριόν σου, ὃ ἡτοίμασας κατὰ πρόσωπον πάντων τῶν λαῶν, φῶς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν ἐθνῶν καὶ δόξαν λαοῦ σου Ἰσραήλ.

¹⁰³ Klein, 2006, p. 421, following Betz and Bovon.

¹⁰⁴ Greek tekst: Ἐν δὲ τῷ λαλῆσαι.

Text of Luke 11:33-36

Below you will find my text critical reconstruction of the oldest verifiable Greek text of Luke 11:33-36. The information on the Greek texts, and the variation between the text witnesses is derived from Nestle – Alands' twenty-eighth edition of *Novum Testamentum Graece*.

³³Οὐδεὶς λύχνον ἄψας εἰς κρύπτην¹⁰⁵ τίθησιν (...) ¹⁰⁶ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὴν λυχνίαν, ἵνα οἱ εἰσπορευόμενοι τὸ φῶς¹⁰⁷ βλέπωσιν.

³⁴Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου. ὅταν (...) ¹⁰⁸ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς ᾖ, καὶ ὅλον¹⁰⁹ τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινόν ἐστιν¹¹⁰. ἐπὶ δὲ πονηρὸς ᾖ, καὶ τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινόν (...) ¹¹¹.

³⁵Σκόπει οὖν μὴ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ σκότος ἐστίν.

¹⁰⁵ A small number of text witnesses read κρύπτον *concealment*. This should be seen as secondary reading. Not only because we find this variant in only three manuscripts (P⁴⁵, Ψ, 1), but also because it does not fit the context of Luke 11:33. In the text a house is implicated by the use of λυχνίαν and οἱ εἰσπορευόμενοι. This implicates another thing or place that obstructs the light to be seen in opposite to λυχνίαν that shows the light to the εἰσπορευόμενοι.

¹⁰⁶ Numerous text witnesses add here οὐδὲ ὑπὸ τὸν μόδιον, *nor under the bushel*, (like: κ A B C D and others), but the absence of these words in P⁴⁵ and P⁷⁵ could be original, because the use of εἰς κρύπτην without article represents Luke's style of writing, while the article with μόδιον contradicts with that (See: Klein, 2006, p. 422). It therefore seems to me that οὐδὲ ὑπὸ τὸν μόδιον is added later, maybe influenced by Matthew 5:15: οὐδὲ καίουσιν λύχνον καὶ τιθέασιν αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τὸν μόδιον ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὴν λυχνίαν (...) (See: Bovon, 1996, p. 189).

¹⁰⁷ A number of text witnesses, a.o. P⁴⁵, A, K, and L, attest φεγγος instead of φῶς. According to Bovon φεγγος could be the most authentic reading (see: Bovon, 1996, p. 189). However, φεγγος only appears two more times in the New Testament (Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24), where in both cases the shining of the moon is meant. Φῶς appears much more often in the New Testament writings for all sorts of light, both literarily and metaphorically (See: Bauer, 1988). This together with its attestation in the important text witnesses P⁷⁵, κ, B and C makes φῶς the most likely original reading (see also; Klein, 2006, p. 422).

¹⁰⁸ Influenced by the parallel reading Matthew 6:22 οὖν was added in several text witnesses.

¹⁰⁹ It seems to me that ὅλον should be considered the most likely authentic reading, since only P⁴⁵ and D read παν instead of ὅλον.

¹¹⁰ Instead of ἐστιν *is*, a number of text witnesses read ἐσται *will be*. This can be explained by the parallel with Matthew 6:23, where ἐσται is read, which makes ἐστιν the more probable authentic reading.

¹¹¹ Some text witnesses add ἐσται, likely because of the same parallel with Matthew 6:23 mentioned under footnote ¹¹⁰. Most of the manuscripts that add ἐσται, also read ἐσται instead of ἐστιν in the text that is discussed under footnote ¹¹⁰ (like: P⁴⁵, κ, 1241, 2542, *al*, *lat*). Another variation is the addition of ἐστιν, but this being a more comfortable reading, together with the fact that the majority of text witnesses do not read ἐστιν, excludes this reading as possibly original text.

36Εἰ οὖν τὸ σῶμά σου ὅλον φωτεινόν, μὴ ἔχον μέρος τι¹¹² σκοτεινόν, ἔσται
φωτεινόν ὅλον ὡς ὅταν ὁ λύχνος (...) ¹¹³τῇ ἀστραπῇ φωτίζη σε.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Variations are: τι μέρος, attested in 8 and M; just μέρος, attested in C, L, Γ, Θ, Ψ and others; and μέλος *limb*, attested in P⁴⁵. In my choice I followed Klein (2006, p. 423) and Nestle – Aland's decision on manuscripts.

¹¹³ B and 579, add ἐν.

¹¹⁴ Instead of the verses 35 and 36 as attested above, D and *it* read: εἰ οὖν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ σκότος ἐστίν, τὸ σκότος πόσον. Likewise, 1241 adds these words before verse 36, and Sy^c reads them instead of verse 36. These readings are influenced by the parallel text of Matthew 6:23, and should therefore be considered secondary.

Translation of Luke 11:33-36

Below you will find my translation of Luke 11:33-36 from the Greek text as identified in the former paragraph.

³³*No one places a lamp he lightened in a basement¹¹⁵, but on a lampstand, so that the ones who enter see the light.*

³⁴*The lamp of the body is your eye. If your eye is single/pure¹¹⁶, also your whole body is enlightened; however, when it is bad¹¹⁷, also your body [is] dark.*

³⁵*Behold¹¹⁸ then that the light in you is not darkness.*

³⁶*If then your body is totally enlightened, not having a part of dark, it will be totally enlightened, as when the lamp lightens you with its shine¹¹⁹.*

¹¹⁵ Ἡ κρύπτη means *crypt* or *vault* (Liddell – Scott). In the New Testament this word is only attested in this text, meaning something like *dark corridor*, *store-cellar*, or *archway*, according to Bauer. Clearly it should be some place dark and hidden. Assuming the εἰσπορευόμενοι are entering a house in this simile, I choose *basement* as translation for κρύπτην.

¹¹⁶ A direct translation of ἀπλοῦς would be *single*, and as we have seen earlier (see p. 16-17), ἀπλότης stands for integrity of the pious in his undivided and unrestricted obedience and devotion to God (Hollander – De Jonge, 1985, p. 233-234). In the context of Luke 11:33-36 the ἀπλοῦς eye shines out the Godly light unspoiled (as described in the paragraph about the meaning of the logion in Lukan context, p. 24-28). Because of this unspoiled shining through the ἀπλοῦς eye, and considering the pious integrity the term contains, I plead for an understanding of ἀπλοῦς in this text as *pure*.

¹¹⁷ *Bad* is a common translation of πονήρος, which fits here. How this badness of the eye should be defined will be further discussed in the next paragraph.

¹¹⁸ Jesus summons the hearer to *examine*, or *contemplate* his own 'light within' (meanings of σκόπεω according to Liddell – Scott).

¹¹⁹ The shining of lamp has adapted a metaphorical meaning through the use of the word ἀστραπή (see: p. 25-26).

The Meaning of the Logion in Lukan Context

From the two paragraphs above we can conclude that the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body appears in Luke 11:33-35 as follows:

³⁴Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου. ὅταν ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς ᾖ, καὶ ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινὸν ἐστίν· ἐπὰν δὲ πονηρὸς ᾖ, καὶ τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινόν.

³⁵Σκόπει οὖν μὴ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ σκότος ἐστίν.

³⁴*The lamp of the body is your eye. If your eye is single/pure, also your whole body is enlightened; however, when it is bad, also your body (is) dark.*

³⁵*Behold then that the light in you is not darkness.*

As said before in the paragraph on the logion in Matthew, the interpretation of this logion has been point of discussion in New Testament scholarship. One of the problems with this logion is that it contradicts itself in defining the source of the light that it speaks of. In the first place the eye is introduced as the source of the light, since it is called *the lamp of the body*¹²⁰ (Luke 11:34/Matthew 6:22). In contrast with that, the next part of the logion does suggest that the source of the light is within the body by speaking of *the light in you*¹²¹ (Luke 11:35/Mark 6:23). On top of this comes the paradoxical possibility that this inner light can be *darkness*¹²² (Luke 11:35/Mark 6:23). This puzzle of the eye being the lamp of an enlightened body that, nevertheless, could be dark, led scholars to seek the meaning of this logion in (ancient) vision theories, assuming that the physiological ideas behind the logion could shed light on its meaning.

From modern understanding of the working of the eye, we may say that the eye is a window rather than a lamp. Scholars interpreted the logion this way, by saying that the eye indeed lightens the body by shining the light from the outside into the body. However, the eye/lamp comparison suggests that the eye contains its own light. This idea does not fit our modern understanding, but it does fit ancient Jewish texts in which the eye and the lamp are likened.¹²³ From the logion we could suggest that the light of the eye shines into the body. Betz subscribes such an endoscopic theory of vision, and states that the history of this image means that we are talking about a quasi-philosophical *sententia*, interpreting the phenomenon of the human eye as a means of illumination, not only of the body but also of the mind.¹²⁴ Betz refers to ancient vision theories in which the function of the healthy eye is to illuminate the body. The body then, should be understood as a vessel that is dark inside unless it is illuminated.¹²⁵ On first sight it seems that this is indeed the vision theory behind Luke's interpretation of the logion, as the author clarifies the logion in verse 36 by saying that the body is enlightened by the lamp:

¹²⁰ Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός.

¹²¹ Τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ.

¹²² Σκότος.

¹²³ Daniel 10:6; Zechariah 4; T. Job 18:3; 2 Enoch 35:2 (see also: Davies – Allison, 1988, p.635-636).

¹²⁴ Betz, 1995, p. 441.

¹²⁵ Betz, 1995, p. 451.

36Εἰ οὖν τὸ σῶμά σου ὅλον φωτεινόν, μὴ ἔχον μέρος τι σκοτεινόν, ἔσται φωτεινόν ὅλον ὡς ὅταν ὁ λύχνος τῇ ἀστραπῇ φωτίζῃ σε.

36*If then your body is totally enlightened, not having a part of dark, it will be totally enlightened, as when the lamp lightens you with its shine.*

However, despite this Lukan comment on the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body, the discrepancy between the light of the eye and the light in the body remains. And the question is whether Betz' extensively described interpretation of the logion from ancient vision theory provides us with some real answers.

Another way to connect *the light in you* to the eye/lamp comparison in the beginning of the logion is to explain the logion from an extrascopic theory of vision. In this theory it is the eye that shines its light to the outside world. According to Davies - Allison it is likely that the eye/lamp comparison would only be natural for one holding such an extrascopic theory of vision,¹²⁶ because wherever in ancient Jewish text the eye is likened with the lamp, the comparison never has to do with the eye conveying light to the inward parts.¹²⁷ Moreover, Clement of Alexandria seems to have read the logion as involving the extrascopic theory of vision.¹²⁸ This theory explains the discrepancy between the light of the eye and the light in the body, by showing how the light within the body shines out through the eyes. The eye does indeed shine as a lamp, but does not contain its own light. The light comes from within, from the enlightened body. It is this theory of vision that is most probably behind the logion (in both Luke and Matthew). However, this leaves us with the problem of Luke 11:36, where it is the lamp that enlightens the body.

The solution to the problems described above, and the key to interpretation of the whole pericope of Luke 11:33-36, might lie in the consideration that the light of the eye, irrespective of what it means, is different from the light within the person.¹²⁹ Considering the logion in Lukan context, this leads to the question whether it is the eye that is meant by the ὁ λύχνος in Luke 11:36, or some other lamp that enlightens the body. A close look at the text of Luke 11:36 points to the last option: not the eye of verse 34 is meant by ὁ λύχνος in verse 36, but something else, something greater. One indication that points to this interpretation is the article that is used with λύχνος in verse 36. If a normal lamp was meant, as in the eye/lamp comparison, an article less variant would suffice. What is more, if it was the eye that was meant by this lamp, one would expect a reference to it. A second indication pointing to not just another, but an even greater light than the light of the eye as a lamp, is the use of ἀστραπῇ. The Greek ἀστραπῇ stands for the flash and glance of lightning, or the lightning itself that could consume people.¹³⁰ In the New Testament it is used to describe the lightning that lightens the whole sky (Matthew 24:27), which comes from God's throne (Apocalyps 4:5), and comes with cosmic

¹²⁶ Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 635.

¹²⁷ Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 636.

¹²⁸ Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 636.

¹²⁹ Zöckler, 2001, p. 491.

¹³⁰ See: Liddell – Scott, 1925.

separation (Ap. 8:5; 11:19; 16:18).¹³¹ The use of ἀστραπή in Luke 11:36 thus suggests a *lamp*, of which the *shine* is of the category of godly lightning.

With the above knowledge it should be clear that the use of the article with λύχνος, and of the word ἀστραπή to describe the lamp's light in Luke 11:36, points to the possibility that the light in the body should be interpreted as a godly light. Within Lukan context the light of Christ is meant, as a close look at the use of φῶς in Luke-Acts convincingly shows. Indeed φῶς is not just *light* in Luke-Acts, but some *light* connected to Jesus or God: The Gospel of Luke says that everything uttered in darkness shall be heard in the *light* (Luke 12:3). Luke 16:8 makes a distinction between the children of the earth and the children of the *light*. Thereby, it seems not without any reason that τὸ φῶς is *the light* in which Peter is recognised as a follower of Jesus (Luke 22:56). Also in Acts φῶς refers to the *light* associated with Jesus Christ.¹³² When an angel enters the cell where Peter is imprisoned, the cell is filled with *light* (Acts 12:7). Φῶς is also the light of Christ from heaven that Paul saw on his way to Damascus (Acts 9:3; 22:6, 9, 11; 26:13), when he was converted from persecutor to follower of the message of Jesus. The use of φῶς shows the author's idea of *Heilsgeschichte*: The *light* of Jesus Christ that should be brought to all people, Jews and gentiles. As Paul tells at the end of Acts, he was called to "*open their (Jewish people and gentiles) eyes, so that they may turn from darkness into light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they receive for themselves forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me (Jesus)*" (Acts 26:18).¹³³ Paul states (Acts 26:22) that it was foresaid by Moses and the prophets, "*that the Christ would suffer, that he would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light both to our people (Jews) and to the gentiles.*" (Acts 26:23).¹³⁴ This refers to the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, where the baby Jesus is recognised by Simeon as the *light* for revelation to the gentiles (Luke 2:32). As we have seen in the introduction of this paragraph,¹³⁵ this is the core message of Luke-Acts. Jesus Christ is the light of revelation to the world. This light of salvation in Christ shines through the followers of Jesus Christ, as it is also said in Acts 13:47, where Isaiah 49:6 is quoted with the words: *I have set you to be a light to the gentiles, so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth* (Acts 13:47).¹³⁶

With the above considerations in mind, it is my conviction that our pericope about light and shining should be read in the light of Luke-Acts' *Heilsgeschichte* of the light of salvation in

¹³¹ Bauer, 1988.

¹³² Maybe except for Acts 16:29, where the prison keeper asks for φῶτα before he sets Paul and Silas free.

¹³³ Greek text: ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμούς αὐτῶν, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκοτόους εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κληρὸν ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ.

¹³⁴ Greek text: εἰ παθητὸς ὁ χριστός, εἰ πρῶτος ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν φῶς μέλλει καταγγέλλειν τῷ τε λαῷ καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.

¹³⁵ See the introduction of this chapter, especially p. 19-20.

¹³⁶ Greek text: τέθεικά σε εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν τοῦ εἶναί σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.

Isaiah 49:6 says: ἰδοὺ τέθεικά σε εἰς διαθήκην γένους εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν τοῦ εἶναί σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.

Hebrew text: וְנִתְּנָהְךָ לְאוֹרַם לְגוֹיִם לְהַיְוִת שְׁמוֹעִתִּי עַד־קֶצֶר הַיָּמִים

Christ coming to Jews and gentiles. This theme is introduced by the logion about the lamp on the standard (Luke 11:33), which shows a context that is about the shining of this *light*:

Οὐδεὶς λύχνον ἄψας εἰς κρύπτην τίθησιν ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὴν λυχνίαν, ἵνα οἱ εἰσπορευόμενοι τὸ φῶς βλέπωσιν.

No one places a lamp he lightened in a basement, but on a lampstand, so that the ones who enter see the light.

This logion is also present in Matthew 5:15, where it is preceded by the words in verse 14 that identify the hearers of these words as the *light of the world*,¹³⁷ that cannot be hidden any more than a city on a hill could be concealed. Like the lamp on the standard, these hearers should shine their light before others, “so that they see your good works and praise your father in heaven.”¹³⁸ In Luke this logion has the same function in emphasising that the light that is spoken of should not be hidden, but should shine into the world. However, different from Matthew, it is used by the author of Luke as an introduction to the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body in Luke 11:34-35:

³⁴Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου. ὅταν ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς ᾖ, καὶ ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινόν ἐστιν· ἐπὰν δὲ πονηρὸς ᾖ, καὶ τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινόν.

³⁵Σκόπει οὖν μὴ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ σκότος ἐστίν.

³⁴*The lamp of the body is your eye. If your eye is single/pure, also your whole body is enlightened; however, when it is bad, also your body (is) dark.*

³⁵*Behold then that the light in you is not darkness.*

As we know now, the light within the body is, despite the eye/lamp comparison, not coming from the eye. It is a source in itself, namely the light of salvation in Christ (just like it is in Matthew 5:14-16). This excludes the idea that the logion should be understood from an endoscopic vision theory. The eye is a lamp (of the body) in the sense that it shines the light within to the outside world. This fits an interpretation from extrascopic vision theory. Since Jesus summons the hearer to behold the light within, and not the eye, the author of Luke shows that the logion is about the light within. The eye then is the lamp that shines the inner light to the outside world.

In Lukan context we could say that the words ἀπλοῦς and πονηρός stand for what cooperates with, or obstructs the inner light of Christ to shine out to the world. Since the light of Christ stands for the salvation by forgiveness of sins (Acts 26:18), the meaning of ἀπλοῦς and πονηρός should be described in relation to sin. Because sin is darkness, the πονηρός eye should be seen as the *sinful* or *bad* eye that obstructs the inner light to shine out. The ἀπλοῦς eye then stands for the absence of sin, a connotation the word ἀπλότης as *singleness* also has

¹³⁷ Φῶς τοῦ κόσμου (Matthew 5:14).

¹³⁸ ὅπως ἴδωσιν ὑμῶν τὰ καλὰ ἔργα καὶ δοξάσωσιν τὸν πατέρα ὑμῶν τὸν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς (Matthew 5:16).

in Greek Jewish literature.¹³⁹ As ἀπλότης stands for purity, the ἀπλοῦς eye stands for the pure eye that shines through the inner light unaltered. For the outsider the eye is the lamp, but the light it shines does not come from the eye itself, it comes from the inside of the body where *The Lamp* (ὁ λύχνος,) ¹⁴⁰ of the salvation in Christ lightens the world with its *Godly shine* (ἀστραπῇ).¹⁴¹ With these words the hearer of the words of Jesus in Luke is made part of the *Heilsgeschichte* that is described in Luke-Acts. As this light shines within his body, the hearer should shine this light of salvation in Christ, being pure and without sin.

¹³⁹ See the paragraph on the meaning of the logion in Matthean context, especially p. 16-17

¹⁴⁰ Luke 11:36.

¹⁴¹ Luke 11:36.

The Logion in the Gospel of Thomas

Introduction

The last context in which I will investigate the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body is that of the Gospel of Thomas 24. This is one of the sayings of Jesus forming the Coptic manuscript that is called the Gospel of Thomas, which was discovered only seventy years ago.¹⁴² In this text the eye/lamp comparison is absent. We only find a saying similar to the second part of the logion, when Jesus answers the question of his disciples where to find him with the words: *“there is light within the person of light (...)”*

The text of the gospel itself suggests that the author of the Gospel is Thomas the disciple of Jesus.¹⁴³ The gospel is introduced with the words: *“those are the hidden words which the living Jesus spoke and (Didymos) Jude Thomas wrote down.”*¹⁴⁴ The name Didymos Jude Thomas clearly refers to the disciple Thomas we know from the canonical gospels, where we find the name Thomas, but also the Greek translation of this Aramaic name, Didymos. Besides that we know that this disciple was known in Syrian environment as Jude Thomas.¹⁴⁵ Scholars today do not consider this gospel to be a writing of Thomas the disciple of Jesus. Despite that, however, the names that point to him give some indication of the origin of the text. The use of the name Jude Thomas together with the parallels with Syrian traditions¹⁴⁶ makes most scholars locate the first written form of the gospel in Syria.¹⁴⁷ Some scholars place the origin of the gospel in the context of Manichaeism, as Cyril of Jerusalem ascribes the gospel to these non-orthodox gnostic Christians half way the fourth century CE.¹⁴⁸ Although all these things give some information about the background of the gospel, they do not lead to one plausible author.

The Gospel of Thomas was often dated around 140 CE or later. Because the complete Coptic manuscript of the gospel was found in a fourth century Gnostic library, the assumption was that the gospel should be dated in a time when loose Gnostic ideas had developed into a more

¹⁴² Around the year 1945 an ancient storage jar was accidentally found by local people some fifteen miles north of the town Nag Hammadi in Egypt. The storage jar contained twelve codices, plus eight pages of a thirteenth, containing forty-six different works, which were for the greatest part Christian compositions. Most of them were until then completely unknown, about others there had been speculations. On the basis of other texts they were seen as independent writings considered to be lost in antiquity. The Gospel of Thomas is one of these manuscripts and can be found in the codex now called Nag Hammadi Codex II. Before the finding at Nag Hammadi some Greek fragments of this gospel were already known from a find at Oxyrhynchus at the beginning of the twentieth century. These fragments were seen at that time as fragments of an unknown gospel. After the finding in Nag Hammadi they were identified as early parts of the Gospel of Thomas.

¹⁴³ Subscription of the gospel: τὸ κατὰ Θωμᾶν εὐαγγέλιον (Greek translation of the Coptic text).

¹⁴⁴ Gospel of Thomas 1.1. Greek tekst (POxy 654): Οἱτοὶ οἱ λόγοι οἱ ἀπόκρυφοὶ οὓς ἐλάλησεν Ἰσοῦς ὁ ζῶν καὶ ἔγραψεν Ἰούδα ὁ Θωμᾶ. The Coptic text speaks of Didymos Jude Thomas.

¹⁴⁵ Menard, 1975, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ As shown by Ménard (Ménard, 1975, p. 11, 13-25).

¹⁴⁷ Roukema, 2005, p. 20.

¹⁴⁸ See: Plisch, 2007, p. 14.

or less complete Gnostic worldview. Other reasons for a dating of the Gospel of Thomas in a period from 140 CE are its Platonising thought patterns, its critical attitude towards the Old Testament and its polemics against apostolic Christianity.¹⁴⁹ On the other hand parallels with the synoptic gospels point to a much earlier date of at least those parts of the Gospel of Thomas similar to the synoptic texts. However, neither an early nor a late date is satisfactory, because both are based on limited parts or aspects of the Gospel of Thomas. The first completed version of the Gospel of Thomas should be searched for in a Greek manuscript in the first decades of the second century¹⁵⁰ This Greek manuscript developed from earlier traditions that go back to the first half of the first century. Dating the gospel around 140 CE is not necessary, because there is no evidence for the fully developed Gnostic systems in the Gospel of Thomas.¹⁵¹

One of the reasons that makes it so difficult to establish a date or author of the Gospel of Thomas is its history of development. Today scholars have shown that the development of the Gospel of Thomas is the result of a complex process rather than of an author bringing together oral and written traditions about Jesus, as was thought before. Richard Valantasis for instance claims that there are at least seven layers in the development of the Gospel of Thomas: 1: the original sayings of Jesus that circulated orally, 2: the author that collected and wrote down these sayings, 3: communities that used these recorded sayings in their literature and probably adapted sayings that were common in their own context, 4: these communities reproduced the text adding their own sayings, 5: the last Greek scribe who influenced the text of the gospel (Oxyrhynchus fragments¹⁵²), 6: the Coptic translation, most likely by multiple persons, and 7: the last Coptic scribe who produced the manuscript found at Nag Hammadi. According to Valantasis, "Each of these layers could safely be called the Gospel of Thomas, but clearly each one refers to a different production, version, or edition of the gospel that the author wrote."¹⁵³ Another theory is that of April D. DeConick. In her book *Recovering the Original Gospel of Thomas: A History of the Gospel and its Growth* she suggests a core of oldest sayings she calls the *Kernel* or *Kernel gospel*. According to DeConick there were three redactions of the Kernel gospel, influenced by different crises like the fall of the Temple, the delayed eschaton and the collapse of apocalyptic theology.¹⁵⁴ This is what she calls the "Rolling Corpus Model".¹⁵⁵ The Kernel gospel is, in this theory, the written version of a collection of early orally transmitted Christian traditions, and could therefore be called an oral text.¹⁵⁶ According to DeConick, a study of the themes and structure of the Kernel gospel will provide us with Christian traditions that possibly pre-date Q and Paul.¹⁵⁷ The models of DeConick and Valantasis give a good and

¹⁴⁹ Luttikhuisen, 2012, p. 120.

¹⁵⁰ See: Valantasis, 1997, p.20; Luttikhuisen, 2012, p. 121.

¹⁵¹ Valantasis, 1997, p. 14.

¹⁵² See footnote ¹⁴⁰ and p. 31.

¹⁵³ Valantasis, 1997, p. 5.

¹⁵⁴ See: DeConick, 2006.

¹⁵⁵ See: DeConick, 2005, p. 56.

¹⁵⁶ See: DeConick, 2005, p. 55.

¹⁵⁷ DeConick, 2006, p. 95.

nuanced view that might be close to the reality of the development of the Gospel of Thomas. They also show that it is reasonable that an old collection of sayings existed which was extended and reinterpreted over time into the Gospel of Thomas we now have. Other, more simplified development theories¹⁵⁸ do no right to the early parts of the Gospel of Thomas, nor to the great diversity of early Christian thoughts it represents, nor to the important role of oral tradition.

The Gospel of Thomas is different from other gospels because it is not a narrative, but rather a collection of sayings of Jesus. Each saying is introduced either by a question from (one of) the disciples, or just with the words *Jesus said*.¹⁵⁹ Approximately one third of these sayings also feature in the canonical gospels of the New Testament¹⁶⁰. The other sayings were either known from other sources (of which some turned out to be Greek fragments of the Gospel of Thomas) or were totally unknown until the discovery of the Coptic manuscript of the gospel. Within the collection we find a great variety of sayings. Some sayings are typically “Gnostic”, while others fit the earliest Christian traditions like the hypothetical source Q and earliest oral traditions as they appear in the synoptic gospels. The manuscript as a whole, however, is seen as a Gnostic text used among early Christians with a non-orthodox interpretation of the teachings of Jesus.

In this paragraph I will discuss the twenty-fourth saying of the Gospel of Thomas as the context in which we find the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body, despite the fact that the typical eye/lamp comparison of this logion is not present in the text of Gospel of Thomas. I have chosen to do this because of typical similarities with the logion in Matthew 6 and Luke 11, such as the double disposition of one’s light to be effective or to fail.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Such as the literate model and the redaction model which are well described by DeConick (DeConick, 2005, p. 39-55).

¹⁵⁹ Λέγει Ἰσοῦς.

¹⁶⁰ Luttikhuisen, 2012, p. 118.

¹⁶¹ See: Zöckler, 2001, p. 492.

Text of Thomas 24

In this paragraph you find my reconstruction of the Greek text of Gospel of Thomas 24. I have chosen not to present the Coptic text, because it is not within my own capacity to interpret Coptic accurately. We therefore have to trust the insights of the scholars who are capable to do so, and who supplied us with translations. Other reasons to present a Greek text of Gospel of Thomas 24 are that it is virtually certain that the Coptic was translated from a Greek text,¹⁶² and that a Greek text will be easier to read in comparison to the texts of Matthew and Luke.

The only Greek text witness to Gospel of Thomas 24 is the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 655 (P. Oxy. 655), which is very fragmented. The text below is therefore a reconstruction based on the retranslation of the Coptic text into Greek by Plisch.¹⁶³ His translation is corrected on the basis of the Greek retranslation of the text of Nag Hammadi Codex II 2 as presented in *The Critical Edition of Q*¹⁶⁴ and the text of P. Oxy. 655.¹⁶⁵ The underlined text is what differs from the retranslation of Plisch. My argumentation for these choices can be found in the footnotes. Because the Greek manuscript of P. Oxy. 655 is older than the Coptic text and our only Greek manuscript for Gospel of Thomas 24, the fragments of this text witness function as an important criterion in establishing the Greek text below.

Following the reasoning above the Greek text of Gospel of Thomas 24 should be read as follows:

1λέγουσιν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν τόπον ὅπου εἶ, ἐπεὶ ἀνάγκη ἡμῖν ἔστιν
ἐπιζητεῖν¹⁶⁶ αὐτόν.
2λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ ἔχων ὧτα ἀκουέτω.
3Φῶς ἔστιν ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ φωτεινῷ¹⁶⁷ καὶ φωτίζει τῷ κόσμῳ ὅλῳ¹⁶⁸ ἐὰν μὴ φωτίζῃ
(...)¹⁶⁹ σκότος ἐστίν.

¹⁶² Robinson, 2000, p. 40.

¹⁶³ Plisch, 2007, p. 94.

¹⁶⁴ Robinson – Hoffmann – Kloppenburg, 2000, p. 258.

¹⁶⁵ Also in: Robinson – Hoffmann – Kloppenburg, 2000, p. 258.

¹⁶⁶ Plisch gives his readers the option to choose between ἐπιζητεῖν and ζητεῖν.

¹⁶⁷ Plisch reads: τῷ ἑσῶ (or: ἐντὸς) φωτεινοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ignoring for some reason what we find in P. Oxy 655, namely: [...]ωτεινῷ [...]. I therefore follow the Greek text of Robinson – Hoffmann – Kloppenburg (2000, p. 258), which fits the Greek text of P. Oxy 655.

¹⁶⁸ Plisch reads: ὅλον τὸν κόσμον, which is in contradiction to [...]όσμῳ[...] we find in P. Oxy. 655. I therefore follow the Greek text of Robinson – Hoffmann – Kloppenburg (2000, p. 258).

¹⁶⁹ The reconstruction of text of P. Oxy 655 in Robinson – Hoffmann – Kloppenburg (2000, p. 258) reads τότε, but the Greek retractions of Nag Hammadi II 2 by Plisch (2007, p. 94), and Robinson – Hoffmann – Kloppenburg (2000, p. 258) omit τότε. I follow the last, because τότε is not part of the physical text of P. Oxy 655, but one of the reconstructions of the text that is lost.

Translation of Gospel of Thomas 24

Below you will find my translation of Gospel of Thomas 24 from the Greek text as identified in the former paragraph.

¹*His disciples said: "Show us the place where you are, because it is necessary¹⁷⁰ for us to seek after¹⁷¹ it."*

²*He said to them: "He who has ears, listen!"*

³*Light is in a person of light and it¹⁷² lightens the whole world, whenever it does not give light, darkness is.¹⁷³"*

¹⁷⁰ The word ἀνάγκη expresses a necessity here on the existential level. In older times the word was used for the all-controlling force in the world to which even the gods were submissive (Murre, 2009). In this text it expresses a natural but crucial need to *seek after* (ἐπιζητεῖν) Jesus.

¹⁷¹ The word ἐπιζητεῖν involves more than just searching. It is also *investigating*. This fits the Gnostic idea of salvation by knowledge. The disciples are in contact with Jesus, they ask him questions, so they have already found him (that's why the meaning *searching* does not totally fit), but yet they feel the necessity to search further for him. We therefore should interpret ἐπιζητεῖν as *seek after* or *make further search for* (See: Liddell – Scott, 1925).

¹⁷² It is also possible to translate with *he lightens*, as in the person of light. The translation *it* refers to φῶς as the subject of φωτίζει.

¹⁷³ It is difficult to present the meaning of σκοτός ἐστίν in English without adding words. Although from the Coptic these words could be rendered in a less precise way (see: Zöckler, 2001, p. 495), the implication of the sentence is that the whole world will be dark, if the light in the person of light does not shine. In English you could say *darkness exists*, *(it) is darkness*, *(there) is darkness*, or maybe in relation to the context *(all) is darkness*.

The Meaning of the Logion in Thomasine Context

In Gospel of Thomas 24 we find what I call the Thomasine context of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body. In the third part of this saying (Gospel of Thomas 24.3) we find words that are similar to the second part of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body as we have seen it in Matthew and Luke. Based on these similarities, I will discuss these words as the appearance of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body in Gospel of Thomas. A broader discussion about a possible common origin of these words in Thomas, Luke and Matthew will be discussed in the next chapter.

One of the questions that always springs up when a saying from the Gospel of Thomas is discussed is whether the saying is Gnostic. The reason for this is that the gospel (in its completed state) is seen as a gnostic writing, or at least as a product of many redactions and additions that had its final edition within a gnostic community. In the latter case the Gospel of Thomas should be seen as a gnostic expansion on and interpretation of earlier traditions. This is what Luttikhuizen describes in his book *Gnostic Revisions of Genesis Stories and Early Jesus Traditions*. According to him gnostic Christians “reinterpreted and corrected early Christian traditions.”¹⁷⁴ Although the Gospel of Thomas is not mentioned in this context, and Luttikhuizen himself is not sure whether we could label the gospel as Gnostic,¹⁷⁵ there are some reasons to see the Gospel of Thomas as such a Gnostic revision of early Christian traditions: the gospel shares essential features with classic gnostic ideology. One of them is the use of the term “light”, a key term in the saying discussed in this paragraph. Light is in Gnosticism the Divine being, in which the Gnostic seeks both his origin and his final destiny.¹⁷⁶ Second, the Gospel of Thomas seems to focus on a gnostic interpretation of Genesis and the divine origin of humanity, although it does not take the decisive step by radically distancing the transcendent God from the creator and the created world.¹⁷⁷ A final essential feature is the “gnostic” idea within the Gospel of Thomas about the divinity of the self and its return to the heavenly home.¹⁷⁸ These things are indeed present in the Gospel of Thomas, but it should not lead to a gnostic single-mindedness in our approaching of the text. The gospel is not consistent in the things described above, and some “gnostic” features could also have sounded standard and familiar to Hellenistic Jews and pagans.¹⁷⁹ Considering these issues, Uro speaks about “Gnosticising” as a convenient term to speak about the Gospel of Thomas, as it does right to both the older non-gnostic elements of the gospel and the later Gnostic ideas that are present.¹⁸⁰ Following Uro I state that it would be wrong to label the Gospel of Thomas as a whole as “gnostic”. While we accept the complex development of it, we rather have eyes for the gnostic elements that entered the gospel during its long chain of development. This does not only

¹⁷⁴ Luttikhuizen, 2006, p. 4.

¹⁷⁵ Luttikhuizen, 2012, p. 102.

¹⁷⁶ See: Menard, 1975, p. 116.

¹⁷⁷ Uro, 2003, p. 52.

¹⁷⁸ Uro, 2003, p. 53.

¹⁷⁹ Uro, 2003, p. 53.

¹⁸⁰ See: Uro, 2003, p. 52.

apply to the gospel as a whole. We should even look in this way at the separate sayings of the gospel, as I will show below. The best way to interpret the Gospel of Thomas is to recognise it as an old collection of sayings that were extended and reinterpreted several times until they reached their final form in the Gospel of Thomas we have now before us. We simply cannot interpret Thomas' sayings from a single viewpoint. Gospel of Thomas 24 is a telling example of this.¹⁸¹ Considering the possible development of this saying and the different elements of different Christian traditions that it possibly contains, we will see that, as applies to the gospel as whole, saying 24 is composed from different, recognisable parts of traditions.¹⁸²

From the former paragraph the text of Gospel of Thomas 24 is determined as follows:

1Λέγουσιν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν τόπον ὅπου εἶ, ἐπεὶ ἀνάγκη ἡμῖν
ἐστὶν ἐπιζητεῖν αὐτόν.

2Λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ ἔχων ὦτα ἀκουέτω.

3Φῶς ἐστὶν ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ φωτεῖνῳ καὶ φωτίζει τῷ κόσμῳ ὅλῳ ἐὰν μὴ φωτίζει τότε
σκότος ἐστίν.

1His disciples said: "Show us the place where you are, because it is necessary to us to seek after it."

2He said to them: "He who has ears, listen!"

3Light is in a person of light and it lightens the whole world, whenever it does not give light, darkness is."

A close look shows that two different recognisable parts of early Christian tradition are composed in this logion:

First the words of 24.2 are known as synoptic tradition, where they function as an introducing (or concluding) phrase to some of Jesus sayings.¹⁸³ The theological idea behind these words is the importance of hearing as a metaphor for the recognition of God's power. This becomes clear in Mark 8:18. In this text Jesus responds to the lack of belief by his disciples with the words: "Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear? And do you not remember?"¹⁸⁴ Jesus is clearly disappointed in his disciples for not recognising him in his godly power, while they have seen him doing great miracles before. The words the author of Mark uses here point to Jeremiah 5:21. In this text it is the people of God who do not see his great deeds to them. For this they are judged by Jeremiah who introduces his speech with the words: "Listen to this, people foolish and senseless, who have eyes, but do not see, who have ears but do not hear."¹⁸⁵ A close look at the synoptic texts in which we find a Greek

¹⁸¹ Zöckler, 2001, p. 496.

¹⁸² See also Plisch who presents this statement as a fact (2007, p. 94).

¹⁸³ Mark 4:9, 23; Matthew 11:15; 13:8, 43; Luke 8:8; 14:35.

¹⁸⁴ Greek text: ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντες οὐ βλέπετε καὶ ὦτα ἔχοντες οὐκ ἀκούετε; καὶ οὐ μνημονεύετε.

¹⁸⁵ LXX text: ἀκούσατε δὴ ταῦτα λαὸς μωρὸς καὶ ἀκάρδιος ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ οὐ βλέπουσιν ὦτα αὐτοῖς καὶ οὐκ ἀκούουσιν.

Masoretic text: וְשָׁמְעוּ-נָא זֶה אֵת עַם קִדְלָן וְאֵין לָב עֵינַיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יָרְאוּ אֲנָשִׁים לָהֶם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ-נָא

variation on the words “He who has ears, listen!” shows that in these texts the same function of introducing judgement, as in Jeremiah, is preserved. In Matthew 11:15 the words ὁ ἔχων ὦτα ἀκούετο point to the non-recognition of God’s plan in sending John the Baptist as the new Elia. In all other places the words point to the last judgement on the day the Son of Men returns from heaven. With this meaning the words conclude the parables about the seed (Mark 4:9; Matthew 13:8, 43; Luke 8:8). In Luke 14:35 the words ὁ ἔχων ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκούετο conclude the simile of the salt losing its taste and therefore becoming useless. In Mark 4:23 the words εἰ τις ἔχει ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω mark the words that everything that is hidden shall be disclosed, and everything secret shall be in the light. Words that are introduced by Mark’s presentation of the logion about the lamp on the lamp standard (Mark 4:21), which was used twice by Luke. Once preceding Jesus explanation of the earlier mentioned parable of the seed (Luke 8:16), and once as an introduction to the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body (Luke 6:33). In all these texts the words “*He who has ears, listen!*” introduce a point of judgement where the difference between salvation and damnation is at stake. Therefore, “He who has ears, listen!” As the Gospel of Thomas shares the same traditions as the synoptic gospels, we should interpret the function of the words of Gospel of Thomas 24.2 in the same way. They mark that something of existential urgency is to be said.¹⁸⁶

Second, the words from Gospel of Thomas 24.3 could also be recognised as synoptic tradition, while they are similar to what we find in the second part of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body in Matthew 6:22-23 and Luke 11:34-35. Like these texts Gospel of Thomas 24.3 speaks of one’s light to be effective or to fail, and of darkness as the consequence of this light’s failure. The meaning of the “light” in Gospel of Thomas 24 has, however, often been sought in sayings from the Gospel of Thomas that also involve this term. In this line it has been suggested that saying 24 should be interpreted especially in the line of saying 50, as for instance DeConick tries to do.¹⁸⁷ This saying, together with saying 49, shows the reader that his origin is in the “light” (or the kingdom in saying 49) and that he shall return to this light. This fits a Gnostic worldview in which “light” is the Divine being, in which the Gnostic seeks his ultimate destination.¹⁸⁸ In most gnostic systems the light denotes the divine extramundane realm and the person’s self as descended from this reality.¹⁸⁹ However, as Zöckler rightly states, the reference to the world in saying 24 contradicts with the gnostic idea of this divine extramundane realm, which by definition cannot interact with this world.¹⁹⁰ Where saying 50’s

¹⁸⁶ The words also appear several times in the Gospel of Thomas (sayings 8, 21, 24, 63, 65 and 96), but in a less specific way than in the synoptic gospels. From my position, not recognising the Gospel of Thomas as a contingent whole, I have chosen to explain these words from the synoptic use, which go further back to traditions from the Hebrew Bible, instead of explaining them from the use within the Gospel of Thomas.

¹⁸⁷ DeConick, 1996, p. 70-71.

¹⁸⁸ See: Menard, 1975, p. 116.

¹⁸⁹ Zöckler, 2001, p. 496.

¹⁹⁰ See: Zöckler, 2001, p. 495-496.

emphasis is put on the believer's origin and end, saying 24 speaks about his stay in this world. DeConick does completely neglect this issue, together with the fact that the light in saying 24 is located within the material world, as *in the person of light*. What we see is that DeConick's struggle to present the Gospel of Thomas as a contingent whole¹⁹¹ shows the difficulty of any attempt to tie these sayings to a common underlying doctrine. A difficulty that shows again that we should rather accept the Gospel of Thomas as a loosely edited collection of sayings from different early Christian backgrounds. The result of this is that the gospel could be read from different perspectives (also gnostic), but this does not say anything about its nature.¹⁹² Nor does it allow us to interpret the gospel as a whole from just one of the perspectives it contains. Thinking in this line of thought, Zöckler presents the idea that the early readers would neither have had preferences for certain groups of sayings that are more likely to provide legitimate parallels to saying 24, nor would they be aware of sayings that might more plausibly be considered authentic than others.¹⁹³ He suggests that they might therefore have connected saying 24 with saying 33, which inclines the synoptic saying about the lamp on the lamp standard (Mark 4:21; Matthew 5:15; Luke 6:33; 8:6), speaking of proclaiming "*what you will hear in your ears.*"¹⁹⁴ To me this suggestion seems very reasonable, because both saying 24 and 33 speak about the necessity of the light to become efficacious in the world. The reason this does not fit the ideas of sayings 49 and 50 is that the latter are clearly a later Gnostic addition to the older material of the gospel to which saying 24 belongs.¹⁹⁵ Considering these things, the meaning of Gospel of Thomas 24.3 should lie in the same line as the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body in Luke 11, where this saying is combined with the saying about the lamp on the lamp standard, similar to Gospel of Thomas 33. Gospel of Thomas 24.3 should therefore be seen as an appeal to shine one's inner light into the world.

The first part of saying 24 is a question of the disciples, a recurring motive in the Gospel of Thomas.¹⁹⁶ This phrase forms the introduction to the saying as a whole. The reason I discuss this part of the saying last is that this, in my eyes later added, introduction forms the interpretative context of the rest of the saying. With 24.1 as opening, Gospel of Thomas 24.2-3 now forms Jesus' answer to the request of his disciples: "*Show us the place where you are, because it is necessary for us to seek after it.*"¹⁹⁷ In this way the saying conjoins in a puzzling way Jesus' present location and the indwelling light among people of light.¹⁹⁸ From the introduction in 24.1 Jesus is identified with the light within the person in 24.3, because the phrase 24.3 is now the answer to the disciples request where to find Jesus. This inquiring about the abode of Jesus is best understood as reflecting the situation of early Christians who sought to solve the

¹⁹¹ See: DeConick, 1996.

¹⁹² See: Plisch, 2007, p. 36.

¹⁹³ Zöckler, 2001, p. 497.

¹⁹⁴ Valantasis, 1997, p. 108.

¹⁹⁵ See: Zöckler, 2001, p. 497-498.

¹⁹⁶ See: Plisch, 2007, p. 51.

¹⁹⁷ Greek: δειξον ἡμῖν τὸν τόπον ὅπου εἶ, ἐπεὶ ἀνάγκη ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ἐπιζητεῖν αὐτόν.

¹⁹⁸ Valentasis, 1997, p. 98.

problem of how Jesus could be imagined to live on for them after his death.¹⁹⁹ With the adding of 24.1 the redactor shows that, in his view, these questions are meaningless.²⁰⁰ He interprets 24.3 in a new, unorthodox way: the locus of Jesus' presence and his origin, is in the lives of the true followers so that "*a person of light*" describes both Jesus and the seeker.²⁰¹ According to the author of Gospel of Thomas 24, if there is a place where Jesus may be found, it must be sought within the person.²⁰² This leads us away from the orthodox view that would place the risen Jesus in heaven on the right hand of God, and identifies the light within a person as the light of the gospel, the Kingdom or the Holy Spirit, as we have seen before in Matthew and Luke.

Saying 24 of the Gospel of Thomas is the outcome of the composition of the different parts of tradition, as discussed above. Within this composition they contribute to the message the author of this saying wants to bring forward. The author combined the existing saying about this inner light that should enlighten the world (24.3) with an introduction that we now recognise as synoptic: "*he who has ears, listen!*" (24.2). These words mark that something of existential urgency is about to be said. This urgency also comes forward in the first part of the saying when the disciples speak about the necessity (ἀνάγκη) to seek after Jesus' place. In the disciples' question that forms the introduction to the saying as a whole, the author identifies the light within the person as this place of Jesus. As I showed above it is reasonable to assume that 24.1 is added later to compose with the other elements in 24.2 and 24.3 the new saying 24. The meaning of this saying becomes clear in the combination of three original elements. Without identifying the saying as gnostic, or any other early Christian thinking pattern, we can say that Gospel of Thomas 24 is about the importance of finding Jesus as the inner light within the person that should enlighten the world.

¹⁹⁹ Zöckler, 2001, p. 498.

²⁰⁰ Zöckler, 2001, p. 498.

²⁰¹ Valentasis, 1997, p. 98.

²⁰² Valentasis, 1997, p. 98.

How the Different Texts Point to One Origin

Three Contexts, One Logion

In the first part of this thesis I have worked with the assumption that Matthew 6:22-23, Luke 11:34-45 and Gospel of Thomas 24.3 are representations of the same logion. This assumption is based on the textual similarities between Matthew and Luke, and the literary similarities between the Gospel of Thomas and these two.²⁰³ The reasoning behind this assumption becomes more apparent if we place the Greek words of the three appearances of the logion in a synopsis as I have done in figure 1. Each column shows the logion as it appears in one of the three sources. The logia in the columns are divided in rows in such a way that similarities come together in one of the rows, thus visualising where the texts are alike and where they differ. Colours mark the text that is unique for one source (Matthew: blue, Luke: green, Gospel of Thomas: orange). In black you will find the text of the logion that is equal in two or more of the sources. The words that show similarities with the black text in meaning, but not in text, is marked purple. This gives us the following picture of the appearance of logion about the eye as the lamp of the body in Matthew, Luke and the Gospel of Thomas:

	Matthew 6:22-23	Luke 11:34-35	Gospel of Thomas 24.3
1.	22Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστὶν ὁ ὀφθαλμός.	34Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστὶν ὁ ὀφθαλμός	
2.	ἐὰν οὖν ἡ	σου. ὅταν	
3.	ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς,	ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς	
4.		ἡ, καὶ	
5.	ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινόν	ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινόν	3Φῶς ἐστὶν ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ φωτεινῷ
6.	ἔσται.	ἐστίν.	
7.			καὶ φωτίζει τὸν κόσμον ὅλῳ
8.	23ἐὰν δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου	ἐπὰν δὲ	
9.	πονηρὸς ἡ,	πονηρὸς ἡ,	
10.	ὅλον	καὶ	ἐὰν
11.	τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινόν	τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινόν.	μὴ φωτίζῃ τότε
12.	ἔσται. εἰ οὖν	5Σκόπει οὖν μὴ	
13.	τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ	τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ	
14.	σκότος ἐστίν,	σκότος ἐστίν.	σκότος ἐστίν.
15.	τὸ σκότος πόσον.		

Figure 1.

²⁰³ In this I follow the reasoning of Zöckler that significant convergences in the wording and the structure of argumentation in the passages gives reason to consider them loose parallels (2001, p. 488), of which the most important is the double disposition of one's light to be effective or to fail (2001, p. 492).

The synopsis of the Greek texts in figure 1 visualises where the appearances of the logion are alike. The table shows that there is a lot of consensus in the Greek between Matthew and Luke. Compared to them the Gospel of Thomas shows a much smaller content, using other words to formulate a similar message.

We will first look at the similarities in all three sources. In row 14 we see that there is one part of the logion that is textual identic in all three sources: σκότος ἐστίν, *darkness is*. Rows 5 and 11, are identical in Matthew and Luke, and show similar wordings in Gospel of Thomas. If we put these rows together we find the following:

	Matthew	Luke	Gospel of Thomas
5.	ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινόν	ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινόν	Φῶς ἔστιν ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ φωτεινῷ
11.	τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινόν	τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινόν.	μὴ φωτίζῃ τότε
14.	σκότος ἐστίν,	σκότος ἐστίν.	σκότος ἐστίν.

Figure 2.

What we see is that compared to Matthew's and Luke's textual uniformity, Thomas uses different words to say, in essence, the same thing. Where Matthew and Luke speak of the body which could be enlightened or dark, Thomas speaks of the light within the person of light that shines or does fail to do so. In this way, the three sources point to the same theological idea that there is a light that is connected to the person or the person's body. All three state that the absence of this light causes darkness. My conclusion therefore is that the texts in figure 2 give the same message in different wordings. This message will be described as follows: "*there is darkness* (row 14) *if the light of the person* (row 5) *does not shine* (row 11)." It is my conviction that this information tells us that what we find in Matthew 6:22-23, Luke 11:34-35 and Gospel of Thomas 24.3 are representations of the same "core logion". It is what I call the "core" of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body. The actual text of this core that is preserved in all three sources is nihil, because only the Greek words [φ]ωτειν[...] and [σκότος ἐ]στίν are preserved in the manuscripts of these sources²⁰⁴ (φωτειν[...] in row 5 and σκότος ἐστίν in row 14²⁰⁵). The shown similarities and the common message, however, point to a connection between the three texts or maybe to a common origin in a saying that contained the idea that *there is darkness if the light of the person does not shine*.

Apart from the similarities and common message among the three sources as presented in figure 2, there is the even greater similarity in the presentation of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body between Matthew and Luke. If we compare the columns of Matthew 6:22-23 and Luke 11:34-35 in figure 1, we see that there is a striking textual overlap between

²⁰⁴ Reasoning from the Greek retranslation of Thomas and P. Oxy 655.

²⁰⁵ For the Gospel of Thomas this Greek is based on the Coptic translation, which however fits with what we find in P. Oxy 655, namely: [φ]ωτεινῷ (row 5) and [σ]τίν (row 14).

the two sources. In figure 1 the rows 1, 3, 5, 9, 11, 13 and 14 are textual identic. Combining these rows we read the following:

	Greek	Translation
1.	Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν ὁ ὀφθαλμός.	<i>The lamp of the body is the eye.</i>
3.	ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἄπλοῦς,	<i>Your eye is single,</i>
5.	ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινόν.	<i>your whole body is enlightened.</i>
9.	πονηρὸς ἤ,	<i>It is bad,</i>
11.	τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινόν.	<i>your body is darkness.</i>
13.	τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ	<i>The light that is in you</i>
14.	σκότος ἐστίν.	<i>is darkness</i>

Figure 3.

Part of the overlapping text is the text of what I called the core of the logion as presented in figure 2. Compared to the texts in figure 2, Matthew and Luke add the texts in rows 1, 3, 9 and 13. The result of this is an expanding on and reinterpretation of the core message in rows 5, 11 and 14, earlier defined as: *there is darkness if the light of the person does not shine*:

- With row 1 and 3 Matthew and Luke insert *the single eye* as *the lamp* of the enlightened body in row 5.
- Subsequently row 9 assumes the *badness* of this eye as the cause of the darkness of the body in row 11.
- Concluding row 13 identifies *the light that is in you* as the place that is darkness.

In this way the texts of Matthew and Luke combine the idea that the eye is the lamp of the body with the idea that the light within is darkness if the body is not enlightened. The result of this is a puzzling saying about the eye being the lamp of an enlightened body that nevertheless could be dark. As we have seen in the former chapters, the difficulty of this is that there seem to be two sources of the light, namely *the eye* as lamp and the *light that is in you*. Because of the eye's introduction as lamp of the body, the interpretation of the logion is now dependent on how this lamp shines in relation to the body (either in an endoscopic or an extrascopic way). Like the ancient Jewish texts in which the eye and the lamp are likened, and also by Clement of Alexandria in his interpretation of the logion,²⁰⁶ the words of what I have called the core of this logion point to an extrascopic interpretation of the eye as lamp of the body because the words of this core do not relate the *darkness* to the inner body. The reason why Matthew and Luke did so is unclear. For some reason they interpreted the *darkness* as the darkness of the light within instead of the darkness of the world that seems present in the core of the logion, and is explicated by the Gospel Thomas, as is visible in row 7 of figure 1.

On basis of the similarities and textual overlaps as shown and discussed above, I am convinced that Matthew 6:23-24, Luke 11:33-34 and Gospel of Thomas 24.3 are appearances of one logion. Although the actual text has only been partly preserved, the meaning of the original logion can be discovered if we look closely at the similarities among the three sources. This shows that the three sources present the same core message: *“there is darkness if the light of the person*

²⁰⁶ See: Davies – Allison, 1988, p. 636.

does not shine", thereby showing that there is a literary relation among the three texts. Moreover, there is a visible textual relation between Matthew 6:22-23 and Luke 11:34-35 in the fact that the main body of these texts is textually identical. These things raise the question about the origin and the development of the "logion about the eye as the lamp of the body", or, since we gained insight in of this paragraph that there is no lamp in the core of this logion, the "logion about light within you".

The Relation between Matthew 6:22-23 and Luke 11:34-35

From the former paragraph we have learned that there is a relation among Matthew 6:22-23, Luke 11:34-35 and Gospel of Thomas 24.3 in the form of a core logion that is present in each of these texts. This leads us to the question how Matthew, Luke and the Gospel of Thomas relate to each other in their use of this logion. Part of that search is the earliest textual transmission of gospel materials. The most accepted answer provided in scholarship to the question of the so-called synoptic problem is the hypothetical source Q. This theory assumes that in the years 60 or 70 a textual collection of sayings of Jesus existed which is now called Q.²⁰⁷ This collection was most probably composed from earlier smaller collections of oral and perhaps also written material.²⁰⁸ The final product of this collection is assumed to be an important textual source to both the gospels of Matthew and Luke, who also both had access to the Gospel of Mark. Although the existence of Q remains a hypothesis that is based on textual overlaps between the gospels of Matthew and Luke that are not present in Mark, the tenure among many scholars is that they use Q as an unquestioned starting point for their reasoning. Q is seen as an “important fact in history of the oral tradition and written transmission in the early Church.”²⁰⁹ And the hypothetical reconstruction of this source²¹⁰ has become an accepted source in exegetical studies.

Despite the high plausibility of the hypothesis about Q and the fact that it is broadly accepted, a hypothetical reconstruction of a hypothetical source can never be the initial concept in the research on sayings of Jesus. Unfortunately, however, this is what I have seen in the literature and commentaries about the contexts of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body. Scholars point without questioning at Q as the origin of this logion because of the textual overlap between Matthew and Luke as we have seen in the previous paragraph.²¹¹ The scholarly consensus concerning Q is apparently that big that further questions are not asked. Even for those who are sceptical, like myself, our knowledge about Q lets us interpret the overlap between Matthew 6:22-23 and Luke 11:34-35 as the result of two authors who independently made use of the same written source. The next question for sceptical scholars would then be whether this source is Q or some other text or tradition. There is, however, another possible explanation for this overlap, namely that either Matthew or Luke had access to the text of the other gospel. Marc Goodacre for instance suggests that Luke redacted Matthew.²¹² The question therefore is: does Q, or the existence of another common source, explain the data of figure 1 better than the alternative that Luke had access to the Gospel of Matthew?

²⁰⁷ Q comes from *Quelle*, *source*.

²⁰⁸ Hollander, 2000, p. 343.

²⁰⁹ Hollander, 2000, p. 350.

²¹⁰ Robinson – Hoffmann – Kloppenborg, 2000.

²¹¹ See for instance: Betz, 1995, p. 440; Bovon, 1996, p. 188-190; Fleddermann, 2005, p. 520-530; Klein 2006, p. 421; Schröter, 1997, p. 334-347.

²¹² See: Goodacre, 2002, p. 48.

Besides the overlapping texts between Matthew 6:22-23 and Luke 11:34-35, figure 1 shows that both texts have their unique words in how they compose the overlapping text in the logion as they present it. These words are visible in rows 2, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 15 of figure 1. The question is whether these words form their interpretation of the common logion that was available, or that one author had access to the text of the other and changed his words.

What we see is that the meaning of the two logia in Matthew and Luke do not differ much, besides the fact that Luke concludes with a call to examine whether the *light within is not darkness*, while Matthew ends his logion with the proclamation that *if the light in you is dark there will be darkness*. Although the meaning of the logia is similar, the formulation differs due to the unique words of both sources as visible in rows 2, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 15 of figure 1. The best way to explain this is not the idea that Luke had access to the text of Matthew, or the other way around. In that case one would expect the overlap to be larger. To me a better explanation is the idea of a common source, especially with figure 3 in mind as the possible contents of this source. With unique additions, both authors gave their own interpretation of the words they found in their common source.

Based on the reasoning above the only conclusion I can make here, based on my own comparison between the texts, is that Matthew 6:22-23 and Luke 11:34-35 go back to the same source, probably written, which they independently used in their own formulation of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body. The contents of this source form at least the words we find in figure 3. It was this source that combined the core logion about *light within the person* with an eye/lamp simile, and so constructed an early form of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body as we know it from Matthew and Luke. The discussion whether this source might be the same source as that of all other overlaps between the two gospels (Q hypothesis) goes too far and is too complex for this research.

The Position of the Gospel of Thomas.

Next to the textual parallel between Matthew 6:22-23 and Luke 11:34-35, we have also seen a relation or form of dependency between these two texts and the Gospel of Thomas 24.3. This becomes visible when the synopsis of the logia is structured in a table comparing text and meaning as presented in figure 2, which shows that the three gospels share what I have called the core logion. We have seen that the authors of Matthew and Luke had access to a common source that combined this core with an eye/lamp simile. In this paragraph I will discuss the position of the Gospel of Thomas in relation to Matthew, Luke and their common source.

As we have seen the Gospel of Thomas, Matthew and Luke share a core logion about the light within the person. The formulation of this core in the Gospel of Thomas deviates from the other two sources, as visible in figure 2. To explain these differences from the possible relation between the three sources, there are three options that fit the development of these gospels:

The first option is that of literally dependency. In this case the author of the Gospel of Thomas had access to the text of Matthew or Luke, or to both of them. This is unlikely, however, because their appearances of the core logion differ too much. Moreover, Thomas lacks the eye lamp simile that seems important in the understanding of the logion in Matthew and Luke. For these reasons the option that the author of the Gospel of Thomas had access to the same source both Matthew and Luke used for this logion is also unlikely. In the case of literally dependency between these texts and the Gospel of Thomas, we would expect more similar wordings and maybe the eye/lamp simile in the Gospel of Thomas.²¹³

A second option is that the shared core logion is the outcome of a process called *secondary orality*.²¹⁴ In this theory Thomas had no access to the text of Matthew or Luke, but was influenced by re-oralisation of sayings from these texts. This could explain the different formulation of the core while the message is quite the same. The theory suggests, however, a later date for the Gospel of Thomas, and that this gospel came into being through the collection of sayings from different traditions in early Christianity at *one* point in time. This does, however, not fit the character of the text of the Gospel of Thomas, which is best explained as the end product of a corpus of sayings that was redacted and expanded several times in history. In this line of thought I earlier named the models of DeConick²¹⁵ and Valantasis²¹⁶, who give a good and nuanced view that might be close to the reality of the development of the Gospel of Thomas. Their models do not exclude second orality as an option, but they do subscribe to the idea that similarities between the Gospel of Thomas and Matthew or Luke may best be explained as the result of an older core saying that independently found its way to the authors

²¹³ The idea that the source of Matthew and Luke is dependent on (an early form of) the Gospel of Thomas is therefore not discussed in these options.

²¹⁴ See: Uro, 1993.

²¹⁵ "Rolling Corpus Model", DeConick, 2005, p. 56.

²¹⁶ At least seven layers, Valantasis, 1997, p. 4-5.

of the Gospel of Thomas and, in the case of our logion, to the common source of Matthew and Luke.

The third option is that of *primary orality*, which is the notion that Thomas' variations from Matthew and Luke point to the use of oral tradition independent of, and prior to, these gospels.²¹⁷ In this case the text in the Gospel of Thomas is independent of both Matthew and Luke. Several scholarly insights point in this direction. One example is Crossan who states that both the common source of Matthew and Luke (for him that is Q) and the Gospel of Thomas independently go back on a *Common Sayings Tradition*.²¹⁸ In DeConick's *Rolling Corpus Model* we find the *Kernel gospel* as the written version of a collection of early Christian traditions that were orally transmitted. According to her, a study of the themes and structure of this Kernel gospel will provide us with Christian traditions that possibly pre-date Q and Paul.²¹⁹ How a developmental process like this could have worked becomes visible in the earlier presented seven layers that Valentasis sees in the Gospel of Thomas.²²⁰

As I said before, the development history of the Gospel of Thomas is too complex to draw any conclusions considering the relation between Matthew, Luke and the Gospel of Thomas as a whole. But, from the similarities between the texts of Matthew 6:22-23, Luke 11:34-35 and Gospel of Thomas 24.3 we can say that primary orality is the most plausible explanation for the multiple appearances of this logion in the three sources. From this reasoning, the origin of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body, in its core form as presented, should be searched for in oral tradition independent of, and prior to, these gospels. In contemporary New Testament studies this tradition is called *oral Jesus Tradition*. The oral Jesus Tradition is a suggested pool of orally performed traditions preserving the deeds and sayings of the historical Jesus, bridging the gap between Jesus' life and the writing of the gospels.

²¹⁷ Kloppenborg, 2014, p. 204.

²¹⁸ Crossan, 2009, p. 101.

²¹⁹ DeConick, 2006, p. 95.

²²⁰ See the introduction on the Gospel of Thomas, p. 29, and Valentasis, 1997, p 4-5.

A Part of Oral Jesus Tradition?

The theory of oral Jesus Tradition is a model that anticipates on the chronological gap between the writing of our gospel sources and the historical performance of Jesus of Nazareth. This gap implies that before the composition of these sources, oral and perhaps also written stories about Jesus' life on earth circulated.²²¹ Reasoning from the written material we have today, scholars state that after Jesus' death, but also during his life, stories about him and sayings he had uttered were transmitted by the people he had an 'impact' on.²²² The assumption behind this theory is that the 'original impact' of Jesus' mission on his first followers is clearly evident in the tradition preserved by the gospels.²²³ The corpus of sayings and stories that gave expression to this original impact, and developed in the earliest Christian communities where this impact was discussed, is called oral Jesus Tradition.

It is most likely that especially Jesus' sayings had an important role in the oral Jesus Tradition as teachings on how his followers should live until his return. According to Hollander this assumption is all the more plausible since the apostle Paul also refers a few times to sayings of Jesus.²²⁴ It is his conclusion that the oral Jesus Tradition existed of rules and codes for the Christian community that were later on decorated with stories about the life of Jesus in the gospel traditions.²²⁵ Against Hollander, I do not think that the earliest Jesus Tradition consisted of just sayings and rules. Besides Jesus' sayings, stories about his deeds and life, like for example the passion narrative, must also have been part of the traditions that expressed the impact of Jesus. It is therefore reasonable to state that next to Jesus' sayings these stories were also part of earliest oral Jesus Tradition. Nevertheless, Hollander points out the important role of Jesus' sayings in the earliest Christian communities in forming their identity. This importance for the social identification of the earliest Christians implies at least a special esteem for Jesus' sayings within the Jesus Tradition. In this line it seems plausible to me that, within Jesus Tradition, sayings were passed on carefully from the beginning, when happenings in Jesus' life were less strictly remembered as stories and narratives.

As I see it, the sayings of Jesus were originally preserved in oral communication²²⁶ until the moment at which the second generation of Jesus' followers began to write things down. One reason for this assumption is that the first Christians believed that the return of their Lord Jesus Christ would be very soon, at least within the life period of the generation of eyewitnesses.²²⁷ Another, more vital argument for the important role of orality in the earliest Jesus Tradition is the ancient media situation, which was mainly oral in form. At the time of

²²¹ Hollander, 2000, p. 343.

²²² The idea of impact is a central theme in James Dunn's research tot the historical Jesus. See especially Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 2003.

²²³ See: Dunn, 2009, p. 204.

²²⁴ Hollander, 2000, p. 351.

²²⁵ See: Hollander, 2000, p. 351-357.

²²⁶ See also: Valantasis, 1997, p. 6.

²²⁷ See: Mark 13:30; Luke 21:33; Mathew 24:34.

Jesus' life just a small segment of the population was able to read, and an even smaller part was able to write. Furthermore, ancient texts often functioned in a thoroughly oral way, because writing as well as reading was done aloud.²²⁸ Manuscripts were designed to read aloud and to be heard.²²⁹ They were expensive, and are therefore assumed to have been rare. They had no punctuation, no paragraphing, no distinction between upper and lower case letters, no space between the words, and were mostly written on scrolls.²³⁰ These things made it very difficult to read them, yet even more difficult to look back at or search for a particular text. Memorising was therefore an important tool in studying and transmitting texts. All these things give great plausibility to oral transmittance of antique text. That is why we can safely speak of *oral Jesus Tradition*, even if it includes the assumed earliest Christian texts that preceded the sources we have today.

Oral Jesus tradition is characteristically seen as a community tradition of shared memories of what Jesus had said and done, and shared experiences.²³¹ Therefore the oral Jesus Tradition is assumed to be fluid, but preserving the gist of original sayings and narrated events. The variations that have been preserved in the now written texts seem to be no different in kind from the variations that we can safely hypothesise as characteristic of the performance of oral tradition.²³² The core of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body as it becomes clear from the relation among Matthew 6:22-23, Luke 11:34-35 and Gospel of Thomas 24.3 is a great example of this. The different appearances of the logion in these three sources is best explained from the "characteristic combination of stability and diversity, fixity and flexibility"²³³, that we may expect from an orally transmitted tradition. From this reasoning we can assume the core of the logion, as well as the source of Matthew and Luke that combined this core with the eye/lamp simile, as elements of earliest oral Jesus tradition. In earliest Christian communities people told each other that *there is darkness if the light of the person does not shine*.

²²⁸ See: Eve, 2013, p. 8-9.

²²⁹ Eve, 2013, p. 8.

²³⁰ See: Eve, 2013, p. 9.

²³¹ Dunn, 2009, p. 213.

²³² Dunn, 2009, p. 216.

²³³ Dunn, 2009, p. 214.

A Logion of the Historical Jesus?

As I have shown above, the three different sources in which we find the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body point to one origin. This origin must be searched for in the form of a core logion that preserves the idea that *there is darkness if the light of the person does not shine*. In the former paragraph I stated that this core was probably part of earliest oral Jesus tradition. The following question would be the one about the origin of this tradition, or its starting point in the performance of the historical Jesus: did the historical Jesus actually utter words that come down to this idea? In contemporary Jesus research we see that scholars search for the answer to the question about the words of the historical Jesus in what is called *authenticity criteria*. Based on the idea that historians can infer authenticity from certain premises, sayings of Jesus that fit these criteria are considered more plausible to be authentic.

The authenticity criteria used in what is called the quest for the historical Jesus were developed from insights of historical critical New Testament studies. Le Donne lists them as follows: From form criticism arose the assumption that the gospels are theological works, rather than historical ones. This led to authenticity criteria like Bultmann's double dissimilarity,²³⁴ and Perrin's criteria of dissimilarity, -coherence and -multiple attestation.²³⁵ In parallel to form criticism the criteria of Semitisms and Semitic influences²³⁶ and the criteria of multiple attestation and multiple forms were developed.²³⁷ Redactional-critical studies led to the criterion of embarrassment.²³⁸ The problem with these criteria is, however, that they presume a certain knowledge of the context of earliest Jesus Tradition, while we must admit that we simply do not know enough. We know too little of Jesus' native Jewish world, too little about the primitive Church, about other people of Jesus' time like John the Baptist, or about Q, to use these things in a search for authenticity.²³⁹ Another problem with the authenticity criteria is that the equivocal nature of these criteria is such that scholars can do and have done just about anything with them, while they tend to make them do what they want them to do.²⁴⁰ As scholars like Rafael Rodríguez and Dale Allison have recently observed, the project of trying to separate authentic from inauthentic material in the Jesus Tradition is fundamentally misconceived.²⁴¹ Contrary to expectations in the beginning of the quest for the historical Jesus, the criteria approach has failed to overcome subjectivity and to bring order into Jesus research.

An answer to the failure of the criteria approach can be found in Dodd's *History of the Gospel* (1938!). His theory says that the more specific the detail and the fewer the supporting data, the greater is our uncertainty about the authenticity. On the other hand, shared motives from

²³⁴ Keith – Le Donne, 2012, p. 12.

²³⁵ Keith – Le Donne, 2012, p. 13.

²³⁶ Keith – Le Donne, 2012, p. 15.

²³⁷ Keith – Le Donne, 2012, p. 16.

²³⁸ Keith – Le Donne, 2012, p. 14.

²³⁹ See: Allison, 2012, p. 188-190.

²⁴⁰ Allison, 2012, p. 197.

²⁴¹ Eve, 2013, p. 181.

multiple sources in a variety of forms must reflect history.²⁴² It is this theory that Allison adapted in his *Constructing Jesus* (2010). In Dodd's theory Allison finds the answer to the problem of the authenticity criteria: "in the matter of Jesus, we should start not with the parts but with the whole, which means with the general impression that the tradition about him, *in toto*, tends to convey."²⁴³ For me this theory might work, because I see the different gospels as historical presentations of Jesus from different theological perspectives. This suggests a certain amount of coherence among the different gospels in the reporting of historical events of Jesus' life or the sayings he did, and a certain dissimilarity in the theological interpretation of these things. Following Dodd I can say that where sayings share motif and are reflected in multiple attestation and expressed in a variety of forms, they could possibly be sayings of the historical Jesus.

Another workable theory after the failure of the authenticity approach is that of comprehensive historical plausibility.²⁴⁴ This theory states that "What we know of Jesus as a whole must allow him to be recognised within his contemporary Jewish context and must be compatible with the Christian history of his effects."²⁴⁵ In this way the theory of historical plausibility is a theory of coherence, as is Dodd's theory. It is this set of theories of coherence that represent an approach that does most right to the development of Jesus Tradition. The environment that produced this Jesus Tradition was one where coherent memories, concepts and ideologies evolved in several directions, including those that circled back to previously coherent interpretations. As we recognise the typical patterns of memory in the tradition, the judicious historian attempts to project coherence onto the evident relationships among the several and varied trajectories of the Jesus tradition.²⁴⁶ Where sources cohere despite their different forms or times or authors, and the intention of the message coheres with the gist of what we know about the historical Jesus from all these sources, it is in this coherence where we find the historical Jesus. However, the historical Jesus remains a construct, based on historical sources that are by their very nature incomplete.²⁴⁷ When we speak of comprehensive historical plausibility, authenticity remains just an approximation.

With the above theories in mind, we must ask the following to answer the question whether the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body is a saying of the historical Jesus:

- Can we speak of a shared motif from multiple sources in a variety of forms?
- Does the intention of the message of this logion fit the gist of what we know about the message of Jesus?

²⁴² Allison, 2012, p. 194.

²⁴³ Allison, 2012, p. 198.

²⁴⁴ Winter, 2012, p. 128, see also: Theissen – Winter, 2002; Theissen – Merz, 2011.

²⁴⁵ Keith – Le Donne, p. 42.

²⁴⁶ Rodríguez in Keith – le Donne, 2012, p. 113.

²⁴⁷ Winter, 2012, p. 130.

Based on the first paragraphs of this chapter we could answer the first question positively: we have a shared motif in the core of the logion (*there is darkness if the light of the person does not shine*), that is attested in multiple sources (Matthew, Luke and the Gospel of Thomas), and in a variety of contexts. However, we do not have a secure idea of the temporal relationships between Matthew, Luke and the Gospel of Thomas, and therefore cannot be sure whether these sources are independent of each other. If they are not, in theory, we cannot speak of multiple attestation.²⁴⁸

Unfortunately, this limited research does not allow me to answer the second question accurately. The general method that it implies requires an initial big-picture approach to the historical Jesus by inclining all available sources and socio-historical factors in a given theory.²⁴⁹ A first step would be to look at similar texts from the synoptic gospels, such as Matthew 5:14-16, which combines the saying about the lamp standard with the idea of the person being the light of the world, or the Christological stricture of this idea in John 8:12. These things are absent in this research, because my focus here is on the meaning and origin of the logion, not the motif it presents. For this reason a sustained answer to the question whether the intention of the message of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body fits the gist of what we know about the message of Jesus is beyond my reach, for now. For a solid answer to this question I need to carry out a more extensive study on the broad motive that there is darkness without the shining of the person's light, inclining all available material, and theories about their relation to each other.

For now, it may not be so very important to distinguish what Jesus actually said from words subsequently attributed to him by persons sympathetic to his message; in any case, it is hard to see how we could ever be certain whether we made the distinction accurately in any individual case.²⁵⁰ But based on my own impressions from the general idea about Jesus, that I have collected over the few years I have studied the writings within and around the New Testament, I tend to answer the question positively: The intention of the message that there is darkness if the light of the person does not shine fits the gist of what we can know about the message of Jesus. Therefore the core of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body bears the possibility of being a saying of the historical Jesus.

²⁴⁸ See: Goodacre, 2012.

²⁴⁹ Keith – Le Donne, 2012, p. 202.

²⁵⁰ Eve, 2013, p. 183.

Concluding Remarks

The thorough investigation of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body in the three sources revealed a different context and a different meaning of the logion in each of the three sources. The same logion appears in three different contexts, from which it acquires three different meanings:

The meaning of the logion in Matthean context is found in the context of what I call *unconcerned pious poverty*. The singleness of the eye in Matthew 6:22, like the virtue of *singleness* as we find it in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, points to the single concern for the Kingdom. All this in the context of Matthew 6:19-34, where all other daily concerns like food and clothing are nullified by Jesus' sayings about treasure in heaven and God's care for unremarkable birds and flowers. Regarding the eye as indicator of the state of body, the ἀπλοῦς eye mirrors the light within, the humble, *einfach*, person trusting in the Heavenly Father that he will provide what is needed. In his seeking for the kingdom this person shares the light within, being a light to the world. This while the πονηρός eye mirrors the darkness inside. The person with such an eye is splitting his focus and concerns, seeking fortune and certainty for his own earthly future, which makes him greedy and corrupt, darkening the world around him.

In Lukan context the logion is best explained from the author's concept of *Heilsgeschichte*. The words ἀπλοῦς and πονηρός stand for the things that either cooperate with, or obstruct the inner light of Christ to shine out to the world. Since the light of Christ stands for the salvation by forgiveness of sins, the meaning of ἀπλοῦς and πονηρός should be described in relation to sin. Because sin is darkness, the πονηρός eye should be seen as the *sinful* or *bad* eye that obstructs the inner light to shine out. The ἀπλοῦς eye then stands for the absence of sin. Where ἀπλότης stands for purity, the ἀπλοῦς eye is the pure eye that shines out the inner light untouched. For the outsider the eye is the lamp, but the light it shines does not come from the eye itself, it comes from the inside of the body where *the Lamp* of the salvation in Christ lightens the world with its *Godly shine*. With these words, the hearer of the logion from Luke is made part of the *Heilsgeschichte* that is described in Luke-Acts. Like this light shines within his body, the hearer should shine this light of salvation in Christ, being pure and without sin.

In Thomasine context a variation on the core of the logion is combined with an introduction we recognise as synoptic: "*he who has ears, listen!*" (24.2). These words signify that something of existential urgency is about to be said. This urgency also comes forward in the first part of the saying when the disciples speak about the necessity (ἀνάγκη) to seek after Jesus' place. In the disciples' question that forms the introduction to the saying as a whole, the author identifies the light within the person as this place of Jesus. This first part 24.1 was added later to compose the new saying 24 with the other elements. Without identifying the saying as gnostic, or any other early Christian thinking pattern, the meaning of this saying becomes

clear in the combination of the original three elements: the person of light should enlighten the world by searching Jesus as the inner light within the person.

The textual comparison of the logia about the eye as the lamp of the body in the three different sources point to one origin. This origin must be searched for in the form of a core logion that preserved the Greek words [φ]ωτειν[..] and [σκότος ἐ]στίν, and the common idea that *there is darkness if the light of the person does not shine*. The origin of this core most probably lies in the earliest Jesus tradition., because text comparison shows a connection between Matthew and Luke in a common source for their uses of this core in combination with an eye/lamp simile. Since the core of the logion independently appears in the gospel of Thomas, we know that this source most probably derives from an earlier tradition that is shared with the Gospel of Thomas. The best explanation for such a shared tradition that included the core of the logion, and gave room to the source of Matthew and Luke which combined this core with the eye/lamp simile, is the oral Jesus Tradition. The different appearance of the logion in the three sources is best explained from the characteristic combination of stability and diversity, fixity and flexibility of this oral transmitted tradition. Whether the core logion originates from the historical Jesus, however, is too complex to answer properly in a thesis like this. However, from my point of view the core of the logion about the eye as the lamp of the body bears the possibility to be a saying of the historical Jesus, because the intention of the message that there is darkness if the light of the person does not shine, fits the gist of Jesus' message.

My final conclusion from this research is therefore:

In the core of Jesus' logion about the eye as the lamp of the body, we find a piece of earliest Jesus Tradition, possibly originating from the historical Jesus, later adapted by different traditions in different contexts, which implemented it in their own way and with their own meaning.

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ESV *English Standard Version*, (Crossway Bibles, 2011).

NBV *De Nieuwe Bijbelvertaling*, (Nederland Bijbelgenootschap, 2007).